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A HISTORY OF WALES

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE PREHISTORIC AGES	5
II. ROMAN WALES	10
III. INDEPENDENCE AND A NEW FAITH	12
IV. DANISH AND NORMAN ATTACKS	16
V. MEDIEVAL WALES: THE RULE OF THE PRINCES	20
VI. THE ENGLISH CONQUEST	26
VII. THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY: GLYN DŴR	31
VIII. TUDOR RULE	40
IX. PURITAN AND CAVALIER	46
X. THE METHODIST REVIVAL	52
XI. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: RELIGION AND POLITICS	59
XII. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: CULTURE AND EDUCATION	65
XIII. MODERN DEVELOPMENTS	71
BIBLIOGRAPHY	79

A HISTORY OF WALES

CHAPTER I

THE PREHISTORIC AGES

MOST people think of Wales as, at the same time, a land of scenic beauty and the home of labour unrest—a paradise of Nature, in which man has contrived to raise some of the greatest problems of modern life. But while the one aspect is recent, being, indeed, the creation of the nineteenth century, the other is primeval and furnishes the key to the whole history of the country. Our admiration is roused by craggy heights and heather-clad moors; we see an abundance of wood and water; the land is a land of verdure, and everywhere there are glimpses of lake and estuary. Translated into prosaic terms, this means that Wales is a peninsula, washed on three sides by the sea, highly mountainous, and, owing to its westward trend, having a heavy rainfall. Now these are the facts which, from time immemorial, have governed the course of Welsh history. Wales owes its unity, not to political accidents, but to unalterable geographical conditions. Remote from the Continent and with a climate unfavourable to the tillage of the soil, it has not been one of the rich provinces doomed to be the everlasting prey of the conqueror, but, on the contrary, has been the refuge of the defeated, the home of the older races of the island, dislodged from the fertile plains of the east. These races have lived, in the isolation of the hills, a simple, pastoral life; they have tended, patriarchally, their sheep, their horses, and their cattle; they have

preserved old traditions, an ancient language, a manner of life deeply anchored in the past. Thus it came about that there was an effective Wales before the name itself had been coined, in the time of the Roman occupation of Britain and in the early stages of the English conquest.

Welsh isolation, though it has served to create and to conserve a distinctively Welsh type of character, has hardly ever been absolute. Two factors have worked against it—the factor of War and the factor of Religion. The Welsh have been pre-eminently a warlike, and also a religious, people. Intertribal war was, of course, incessant in the days of political independence, for within the unit of Wales itself there were separate tribal communities whose isolation reproduced, on a small scale, that of the main body. But war was chiefly an affair of the eastern border, a struggle with the master of the plains, for here there was not only the duty of defence, the need for the protection of hearth and home, but also the opportunity of plunder, the call of adventure, a perpetual challenge to courage and warlike skill. War was the school in which the Welshman learned to pit his intellect against that of his powerful neighbour, and, when the conflict of arms ceased, it was succeeded by a war of ideas, the opposition of tradition to new conceptions from across the border. The other and no less potent force which has brought Wales into vital contact with the outer world has been religion. Gerald of Wales long ago noted the singular reverence paid by the Welsh to all religious emblems and institutions, and the characteristic is one which runs through all their history. Religious influences came from many quarters—from Ireland, from England, from the Continent—and those which appealed to the Welsh temperament found a ready welcome; they were soon assimilated and took the colour of their surroundings.

The earliest undoubted evidence for the presence of

man in Wales comes from the caves of its limestone formations. It has been established that, after the last retreat of the glaciers which covered Britain, and perhaps 15,000 years ago, hunters lived in the caves of Gower and the Vale of Clwyd and dragged there the bodies of beasts they had slain, many of them, like the cave-bear and the woolly rhinoceros, belonging to species which are now extinct. It is uncertain whether these men, who must have been few in number and very low in the scale of civilization, have left any descendants. The continuous history of Wales begins with their successors, the men of the New Stone Age, who settled in small communities along the Welsh coast and achieved great skill in the manufacture of stone tools and weapons. The uplands were clothed in forest, leaving only the mountain summits bare, so that few remains of the long centuries of neolithic progress have been found in the interior of the country, but the culture which marked the close of the period, between 3000 and 2000 B.C., is well represented along the Welsh seaboard. This was the age of great stone chambers for the burial of the dead, each covered by a mound of earth or a cairn of stones, and approached by a passage. Anglesey and Pembrokeshire have many examples to show of this type of structure, mostly reduced to ruins and familiar under the name of *cromlech*, meaning "shelter stone." The "megalithic" style of building was brought here by a short, long-headed, dark-haired race of Western origin, who practised a primitive agriculture. It was akin to the early dwellers in France and Spain, and, if we may judge by physical type, it is still the dominant element in the population of modern Wales. The short, black-haired, fresh-coloured Welshman and Welshwoman from Caernarvonshire and Glamorganshire are the true children of the soil, seated here from time immemorial.

About 2000 B.C., Britain was invaded by a new set of immigrants, known from their characteristic drink-

ing cups of rough pottery as the Beaker Folk. A revolution was wrought about the same time by the introduction of metal, in the form of bronze, for the fashioning of the weapons hitherto made in stone. The Bronze Age, which passed through many phases, is well represented in Wales, and the wide dispersal of its relics over the whole country shows that by this time the woods were no longer trackless; forest clearing and the slow conquest of the land for the service of man had already begun. The Beaker Folk, men of strong physique and, it would seem, much energy, buried their dead in stone "cists," over which they raised a circular mound or cairn. They were gradually absorbed in the older population, and the distinctive features of their culture passed away. Bronze axes were now more elaborately fashioned; new forms of pottery, to be buried with the dead for use in a future life, were developed out of the old; cremation was introduced and became universal; trade sprang up between the scattered communities, and the latest patterns were brought to Wales by wandering hawkers, not only from the east, but even across the sea from Ireland. About 1000 B.C., a new race again appears, wielding formidable bronze swords and employing bronze for a variety of useful purposes, such as the making of sickles, razors, and personal ornaments.

Thus gradually does Wales emerge from the mist of prehistoric times until it is within the ken of the historian. Even then, the light thrown upon it is faint and intermittent. Neither Pytheas, who visited Britain about 320 B.C., nor Cæsar, in his well-known expeditions of 55 and 54 B.C., penetrated as far as the western peninsula, though the latter appears to have heard of Mona (Anglesey) as a stepping-stone to Ireland. In the description of Britain contained in *The Gallic War*, the interior (which Cæsar did not see) is said to be inhabited by indigenous tribes, who, for the most part, sowed no corn, but lived on milk and flesh

and clothed themselves in skins. Wales must certainly be comprehended in this account, for there the conditions were in a high degree favourable to the pastoral, as opposed to the agricultural, life, and the archaeological evidence is clear that the rich civilization which Cæsar found in Kent and the Thames Valley had not travelled beyond the Severn. No coins, for instance, such as were being minted in the south-east, circulated in Wales, and the new iron culture, though it had crossed over from Gaul some centuries earlier and was well established in Somerset, had not, at the Christian era, gained any real foothold among the Welsh hill-men.

Who were, at this time, the inhabitants of Wales? Already they were a mixed race, differing in physical appearance and possibly in language also. Tacitus, reporting the observations of his father-in-law, Agricola, singles out the Silures of our Glamorgan and Monmouth as of markedly Iberian aspect, with their dark complexions and curly hair. The primitive stock, going back to the New Stone Age, was evidently well represented in this area, as it is to-day. On the question of language, all that is certain is that at the time of the advent of the Romans, Celtic speech had made its appearance in Wales. When it arrived in Britain is still a matter of controversy, but it is beyond doubt that Cæsar found it here in full possession of the south-east, and it may be inferred from place-names (we have no other evidence) that a century or two later it was the language of the Welsh tribes. Was it of the Brythonic or British variety, which turned the original *makvos* into *mâp* (*mâb*), or of the Goidelic or Irish, which retained the consonant as *macc*? A decisive answer is not possible, and hence the view that there was in prehistoric Wales a Goidelic age, when that dialect prevailed, before the coming of Brythonic, must remain, for the present, a theory and nothing more.

CHAPTER II

ROMAN WALES

WHEN Rome determined, under the Emperor Claudius, to annex Britain to the empire, the early stages of the conquest proved by no means difficult. Within five or six years after the landing, the native dynasty which had Colchester as its capital had been overthrown, the fertile south-east had been occupied, and the Roman troops had advanced to the line of the Severn and the Trent. Under the second governor of the province, Ostorius Scapula, when the onward march of the conquerors had brought them to the confines of the hill country in the west, difficulties began. The Silures proved most formidable foes, and their resistance was stiffened by the presence among them of Caratâcus (Caradog), last representative of the eastern line of kings. No less keen fighters were the Ordovices, who occupied Central Wales, the region known later by the name of Powys. Suetonius Paulinus, a redoubtable captain of the time, divined the source of the trouble to be the Island of Mona, where level country beyond the Snowdonian barrier was suited for agriculture and maintained a considerable population. Here was the stronghold of the Druids, priests of a mysterious religion which fills a large space in modern accounts of bygone Wales, but of which ancient descriptions of Britain have very little to tell us. That its influence was great and brought superstition to the aid of patriotism is, however, undoubted; Suetonius was well advised in his attack upon the island, which for the moment was successful. But he was no sooner across the Menai Straits, where Druids and island warriors had made common cause against him, than he was recalled to the east by the great rebellion of A.D. 61. The province was saved, but Wales gained a

further respite of nearly fifteen years; it was not until about A.D. 75 that Julius Frontinus achieved the long-deferred conquest of the lands to the north of the Severn Sea; the Silures, and with them, no doubt, their western neighbours, the Demetae, were finally subdued, and a great fortress was erected at Caerleon to keep them in awe.

It remained to bring the midlands and the north under subjection. This was the task of Julius Agricola, the most famous of the Roman governors of Britain, who embarked upon it as soon as he had taken up office. In 78 he reduced the Ordovices, and then moved to the north-west, where he repeated the exploit of Paulinus in forcing a crossing of the straits and, this time finally, brought Anglesey under Roman rule. For the next three hundred years the fortunes of Wales were closely knit with those of the Roman Empire. It was a military area within the province of Britain, sharing very imperfectly in the civil life of the rest of the province. Venta, the tribal centre of the Silures, became a flourishing town, of which the walls may still be seen at Caerwent. But it stood alone on what is now Welsh soil; far more typical of the region were the two great legionary establishments at Dêva (Chester) and Isca (Caerleon), the headquarters of two important bodies of troops. These formed the backbone of the defence; in front of them and dispersed over the whole of Wales were smaller forts, which gave the first news and bore the first brunt of trouble. Their remains have been excavated and their purpose made clear at Caernarvon, Caerhun, Caersws, Forden, Castell Collen, Aberysgir, Gelligaer, and Cardiff. Roads connected these forts with each other, of which the tradition still survives in the country; many a moorland track betrays its Roman origin in the title *sarn*, or causeway, given to it in popular speech.

Thus the Welsh tribes were held down by force of arms and the peace of the lowlands secured. The

mineral wealth of the country was not neglected; copper from Anglesey, lead from Flintshire, gold from the Cothi Valley were carried off for the service of the emperor. But the region was not regarded as one for ordinary civil settlement; rich provincials, who had adopted the Roman manner of living, did not come here to live. Except for the foreign garrison and the mining communities, Wales was left to itself, to its ancient inhabitants, who pursued the even tenor of their way, with a surprising indifference to the Mediterranean culture brought hither by their conquerors. They lived in rude circular huts which were sometimes grouped in open villages, but were frequently massed in the hilltops, with a strong defensive wall around them, as at Tre'r Ceiri on the Rivals, Dinorben near Abergele, and Penmaenmawr. Thus, while not entirely unaffected by the Latin tongue of their guardians, from which they took over many a loan word, they retained their Celtic speech, their primitive ideas, and their archaic social institutions. Literary traditions we must not expect; there is nothing of the kind in Welsh which carries us back beyond the advent of Christianity.

CHAPTER III

INDEPENDENCE AND A NEW FAITH

IN spite of the protection of the Roman army, Wales was much exposed during the later years of occupation to attacks from Ireland, where the Celts enjoyed full independence. The object was partly slave raiding, and everyone knows how, on one of these expeditions,

the boy Patrick was carried off from a British home to a life of slavery amid the Ulster mountains. But this was not all; large numbers of Irishmen crossed over and settled in Wales, especially in Anglesey, Caernarvonshire, and Pembrokeshire. Thus it came about that when, at the end of the fourth century, Roman authority collapsed entirely in Britain and Wales was left to its own devices, the country is found to be divided between Brythonic and Goidelic (or Irish) settlers, with the result that the withdrawal of the governing power leads to a struggle between the two races. Many memorial inscriptions in the peculiar Irish character known as Ogam have survived in South-West Wales, such as that which surmounted the grave of King Voteporix in the heart of the land of the Demetae; they bear witness to the power of the Goidels hereabouts for several centuries after the departure of the Romans. Ultimately, the Brythonic strain prevailed and Goidelic ceased to be spoken on this side of the Irish Sea, but there is little to guide us as to the course of the conflict. Tradition throws a fitful light upon the scene and ascribes the Brythonic triumph to a leader from Northern Britain, named Cunedda, who with his sons and grandsons drove the *Gwyddyl* westward and founded new dynasties upon the ruins of the old order. Certain it is that, when the smoke of this racial warfare has blown away, we see the land divided into petty states, the rulers of which claim, in many instances, to be of the blood of the valiant Cunedda.

By this time Wales has become Christian. It was not as the official religion of the dying empire that Christianity commended itself to the untutored tribes of the west. They were probably as isolated in religion as in other respects. The victory of the Faith came later, in the age of turmoil and insecurity, and was due to the appeal of the monastic movement. Missionary monks, whose earnestness and zeal made a

deep impression upon the emotional Celt, carried the new religion to the farthest nooks of the country. Some of them settled as hermits in solitary islets; others gathered together in monastic communities under the rule of an abbot and founded churches which were renowned through the Middle Ages and have remained to this day. At Mynyw, among the Goidels of Dyfed, David or Dewi became the bishop-abbot of St. David's; the "clas," or religious fraternity, which he founded threw off many offshoots in South Wales, with the result that, later on, when the diocesan system was established, the Diocese of St. David's covered a large part of that region, and, later still, the Norman settlers in Dyfed raised Dewi to the rank of the patron saint of all Wales. Other notable monastic leaders were Paternus of Llanbadarn in Ceredigion, Teilo of Llandaff, Cadog of Nant Carfan (now Llancarvan), Daniel of Bangor in Arfon, Tysilio and Beuno of Powys. It is due to this monastic activity, unorganized and directed from no common centre, that the parish churches of Wales are dedicated, not to the recognized saints of Christendom, if we except a few to St. Mary and St. Michael, but to saints of local reputation, whom tradition assigns, for the most part, to the era of the establishment of Christianity in the sixth century. These were the protecting geniuses to whom Welshmen appealed in the Middle Ages, perpetuating in this way the pagan conception of divinities which had strictly local powers.

While the Welsh were thus being converted to the Christian Faith, they were being cut off from the other churches of the West by an incoming tide of heathenism. The Teutonic tribes of Northern Germany had, under the name of Saxons—whence the Welsh *Saeson*—long harassed the eastern coast of Britain, and, when the Romans withdrew, they could no longer be kept out of the island; between 450 and 600 they effected a thorough settle-

ment of the lowland regions. It was a slow process, and in the pages of Gildas, a British monk who wrote about 540, we catch a glimpse of an intermediate stage in the story, a time when the English, to call them by the name they have by this time assumed, have come to a halt in their furious onslaught, and British princes, from Cornwall to the Dee, can lead luxurious lives and give a free rein to domestic strife and tyranny. An outstanding figure in Gildas' diatribe, an especial object of his invective, is Maglocunus, or Maelgwn Gwynedd, great-grandson of Cunedda, master of Anglesey and North Wales, who held his court on the rock of Degannwy. It is a notable count in the indictment that Maelgwn, after resigning his crown to enter a monastery, has shamelessly returned to the secular life and to worse sinning than before his conversion. Maelgwn was the ancestor of the later princes of Gwynedd, or North-West Wales, and is said to have died of the Yellow Plague in 547. If he himself had no occasion to meet the English in battle, his descendants were deeply engaged in the struggle, which was renewed as fiercely as ever in the next generation. Cadwallon ap Cadfan of this line spent his life in the vain endeavour to stem the onward march of the Northumbrian English; his overthrow in 634, not far from the Roman Wall, put an end to all hopes of a British recovery of the east and prepared the way for an English advance right up to the borders of Wales.

As is well known, the conversion of the English began with the landing of Augustine in 597, and it was not long ere the Roman mission took up the question of relations with the Christianity of the Celtic West. The affair was badly handled; conferences yielded no result, save the creation of an impassable gulf between the Welsh and the English Churches. It was not as if really momentous issues divided the two communities; the British Church was orthodox and differed from

Rome only in minor matters, of which the date of the celebration of Easter was the chief. Ecclesiastical arrogance on the one hand and national pride on the other were the forces which brought about the schism, which, nevertheless, persisted for over a hundred and fifty years. It was not until 768 that Bishop Elfodd induced his countrymen to abandon the hopeless attitude of isolation and, by accepting the Roman Easter, to enter into communion with the Churches of the West. Henceforth, the loyalty of the Welsh to the See of St. Peter is not in question; their churches had many peculiarities, the result of their previous history, but these were not challenged by the papal power, which found its commands as readily obeyed in Wales as in other Western regions.

CHAPTER IV

DANISH AND NORMAN ATTACKS

At the beginning of the ninth century the stage was set for the drama of Welsh medieval history. Offa's Dyke, the work of the powerful Mercian king of that name (d. 796), marked the extreme limit of English occupation; west of that barrier, which from Prestatyn to the Wye outlines the beginning of the hill country, the Welsh were to be left in peace, in a land which the Saxon farmer did not covet. The Church had passed through its early troubles, losing, at the same time, a good deal of its early enterprise and enthusiasm; instead of the fiery and implacable Gildas, we have the plodding chroniclers Nennius and Asser. The Welsh language had taken a fixed form, discarding its

primitive inflexions, and the faint beginnings of Welsh literature are to be discerned. It is true that Wales, in common with the rest of Western Europe, suffered grievously at this time from the inroads of the Scandinavian pirates; in particular, the monasteries, which almost everywhere lay within reach of the sea, were cruelly ravaged. But it was not the case here, as in England, France, and Ireland, that raiding was followed by settlement. There is very little evidence of Norse or Danish colonization in Wales, and the main effect of the attack was to strengthen the position of the line of Maelgwn, whose descendant, Rhodri the Great (d. 878), ruled all Wales, except the regions of Dyfed, Brecknock, Gwent, and Glamorgan. Rhodri's son, Anarawd, became the ally of Alfred of Wessex, and the family kept its dominant position until the eve of the Norman Conquest, while acknowledging from time to time the overlordship of Alfred's successors. Its most distinguished member was Hywel the Good (d. 950), who acquired Dyfed by marriage and later became king of all Wales; Hywel maintained a close connection with the West Saxon Court, and undertook a pilgrimage to Rome in 928. Tradition makes him the great legislator of Wales, the king who reduced to order and consistency the varying tribal usages and customs of the different parts of the country; for many centuries the "law of Hywel" was the venerable authority and norm of justice to which all Welsh lawyers appealed in practice and in legal argument.

It is a remarkable fact that, just before the Norman Conquest, when England under the Confessor was at a low ebb and exposed to many dangers, Wales experienced a political revival under Gruffydd ap Llywelyn, an adventurer with hardly any hereditary claims, who, nevertheless, by force of character, united the whole Welsh people under his sway, and made them a power to be dreaded all along the line of the

English march. He was finally overthrown in 1063 by the vigour of Earl Harold, but not until he had burnt and plundered so widely as to reduce Offa's Dyke to a nullity; extensive regions around Holywell, Mold, Wrexham, Oswestry, and Radnor, as well as south of Hereford, had been cleared of their English settlers. Much of this ground was, of course, recovered by the Normans in later years, but the triumphant career of Gruffydd had a permanent result in the new confidence and courage it evoked in the people who followed his leadership; the strenuous and largely successful resistance of Wales to the Norman invader must, in no small measure, be looked upon as due to the heartening effect of the victories and triumphs of the previous generation.

When William I. had disposed of his more pressing difficulties, he naturally took in hand the defence of his kingdom against the Welsh. His policy was to establish in each of the three border towns, Chester, Shrewsbury, and Hereford, a trusty follower with the title of earl and very extensive local authority. From these centres an active campaign was to be conducted against the mountain warriors, whose power was to be broken by offensive as well as defensive measures. In the process, any Welsh land which offered attractions was to be seized, not so much for colonization—though in some cases English and Flemish settlers were sent to till the soil—as for exploitation; Welsh vassals were to render dues and menial services to French lords. This policy, pursued for many years with Norman subtlety and persistence, yielded some definite results, but in the long run fell far short of what was intended—viz., the entire subjugation of the peninsula. Its failure was most complete where at first it gave most promise of success—along the coast of North Wales. Here the early victories of Robert of Rhuddlan (d. 1088) were followed up by his relative, Earl Hugh of Chester, who made himself master of Anglesey and the Menai

Straits. But a skirmish with Norse pirates in this region in 1098, when Earl Hugh of Shrewsbury was killed, brought out the insecurity of the position; beyond the Snowdonian fastnesses the land could only be held by sea power, and it was accordingly abandoned to the Welsh. Gruffydd ap Cynan, a scion of the old stock who had been brought up in the Scandinavian kingdom of Dublin, spent a long life in building up, from small beginnings in Anglesey, the principality of Gwynedd, the foundation of later Welsh successes, which he left in good order to his sons in 1137. Powys, the middle kingdom, stretching from Chester to Machynlleth, was, during this period, a vigorous state, ruled by the house of Bleddyn; the Earls of Shrewsbury, beyond building Montgomery Castle, made little impression upon it, nor yet the royal officers who were placed in Shropshire after the suppression of the earldom in 1102. It was in South Wales that the Norman aims were most fully achieved. The first Earl of Hereford conquered the plains of Gwent; though this earldom, like that of Shrewsbury, lasted but a few years, other leaders were found to carry on the conquest of the south. There was a halt of some twelve years, due to the recognition by William I. of the claims of the South Welsh king, Rhys ap Tewdwr, a descendant of Hywel the Good, who had defeated his rivals in the Battle of Mynydd Carn in Pembrokeshire in 1081. But on the death of Rhys in 1093 all obstacles were removed; Glamorgan fell to Robert fitz Hamon, Brecknock to Bernard of Neufmarché, Dyfed and Ceredigion to the House of Montgomery. All that was worth having went to French-speaking soldiers, from Monmouth to St. David's; only the barren hills and the remote woodland retreats were left to the ancient denizens of the country. Such was the position in South Wales at the death of Henry I. in 1135.

CHAPTER V

*MEDIÆVAL WALES: THE RULE OF
THE PRINCES*

IN the Middle Ages Wales presented the same general physical appearance as to-day. But, while much has remained the same, a close observation would reveal many differences. The marshes were wider, the forest land more extensive, the area under tillage immeasurably smaller. At the mouth of the Clwyd the great marsh of Rhuddlan blocked the road to Snowdonia. The tidal flat of Traeth Mawr, stretching from Aberglaslyn to the sea, was an effectual barrier between Ardudwy and Eifionydd. A great forest, fifteen miles long, crowned the Flintshire upland from Ewloe to Prestatyn, while the highlands north of Carmarthen and Llandilo were thickly mantled with oaken scrub. And with this forest background went the wild life of the forest. Wolves ranged freely through the tangled woodland, a constant danger to man and beast. As late as the time of Gerald of Wales the beaver was at home on the banks of the Teifi. Eagles and ravens abounded, the wild cat was not unknown, and goats were, of course, to be found everywhere.

Amid these rough surroundings the Welshman of the Middle Ages lived, if ever man did, dangerously. He was inured to hardship, content with little food, scantily clad, agile in movement, ever on the alert. He was not daunted by the wind and rain which perpetually buffeted him, but reckoned them his best allies against a foreign foe. A certain boldness and confidence of bearing marked him wherever he went; he was unabashed, ready of tongue, and skilful in repartee. Life might be full of perils, but he kept his gaiety and lightness of heart. At the same time he was deeply religious and held the ordinances of the Church

in great esteem. The men of the Church, its property and lands, were safe from attack, and the many ecclesiastical sanctuaries were islands of peace in a sea of troubles. Nowhere was there greater reverence for hermits or greater admiration of the monastic life. The Cistercian movement, which began to make itself felt in Wales about the middle of the twelfth century, found especial favour among the Welsh people; houses like Strata Florida and Aberconway were richly endowed by Welsh princes, and their sheep covered the mountain pastures of Snowdon and Plynlimmon.

Welsh society was, at the same time, fluid and strongly cohesive. Local attachments were weak; there were no towns, few castles, and hardly any villages. Houses were lightly built of timber; they were easily put together and readily sacrificed in case of need. Property was portable; a Welshman's most valuable possessions were his horses, his cattle, and his sheep, which could, in the hour of danger, be driven off to some safer retreat. This was a common expedient in warfare; time and again the foreign invader found that his battalions availed him nothing in a land from which the inhabitants had retreated, carrying their belongings with them on the backs of beasts of burden. But, if the local tie was weak, the personal one was strong. Kinship was a social cement which bound the whole community firmly together; each clansman was attached by birth to a fraternity from which he could not dissociate himself. He paid for the misdeeds of his kinsfolk, and shared in the compensation which they received for loss and disgrace. It mattered not where the man lived; he carried his family obligations and privileges everywhere with him, and even the lapse of centuries could not debar him from asserting his claim to the ancestral rights of his house.

Not that all Welshmen had the same privileges. Social distinctions were strongly marked. Below the free tribesman came the slave, his master's chattel, and

the serf, with house and farm stock of his own, but tied to the soil and subject to many disabilities. Above were the royal clans, from which the princes were drawn, rulers of Powys, Gwynedd, and South Wales, and sometimes of much smaller areas, the cantreds and commotes into which the provinces were divided. The ascendancy of the chief was the basis of all political organization in mediæval Wales. Not only had he a court, with officers charged with specific duties, but he had also in the *teulu*, or household guard, a little standing army of over a hundred horsemen, pledged to his defence, maintained by his bounty, and, except in the depth of winter, when there was no fighting, always at his side. With such a weapon the prince had his subjects entirely under his control, and it is easy to understand how the story of the country, in the heyday of its independence, is but a record of the achievements of the princes, celebrated by monastic scribes in sober chronicles and by bards in rhapsodical eulogies.

The death of Henry I. was a momentous event in the history of Wales. For a generation he had kept the land under masterful control, checking the activities of Gruffydd ap Cynan and the princes of Powys in the north, and allowing hardly any foothold at all for native rule in the south. On the removal of his strong hand there was an immediate reaction; Stephen was, at the best, a weak king, and civil war soon reduced his power to insignificance and gave the Welsh full liberty of action. In every quarter of the country they took up arms; the sons of Gruffydd ap Cynan, Owain and Cadwaladr, appeared in force in South Wales and ably seconded the efforts of the House of Rhys ap Tewdwr. The result was a general establishment of Welsh ascendancy. Gwynedd spread westward as far as the border fortress of Mold, taken by Owain in 1146; Powys, united under the astute Madog ap Maredudd (d. 1160), seized the Castle of Oswestry,

while in the south extensive tracts between Swansea and Aberdovey were wrested from the Normans and brought once more under the authority of Welsh chiefs. These gains were seriously threatened when the English Crown recovered its prestige under Henry II.; two royal expeditions were led into the heart of the country, humbling Owain Gwynedd in 1157 and Rhys ap Gruffydd of South Wales in 1163. But the third, which was meant to complete the subjection, in 1165, was a signal failure; the policy of retreat and the Welsh climate between them checkmated the designs of Henry, so that he was forced to retire from the inclement Berwyn moorlands without having even seen the foe. And this was the last attack upon Welsh independence for a long period; the king found himself involved in the Becket troubles and menaced by a new danger in the baronial conquest of Ireland, with the result that he abandoned the idea of subjugating Wales and adopted instead the policy of an alliance with the Welsh princes. Owain Gwynedd (d. 1170) had not long survived the triumph which set the seal upon his brilliant and honourable career, but his younger contemporary, Rhys ap Gruffydd (grandson of Rhys ap Tewdwr), was well placed to reap the fruits of the victory, and in 1171 Henry, on his way to Ireland through South Wales, met the powerful Welsh leader and came to a complete understanding with him.

The age of "The Lord Rhys" (d. 1197) is vividly depicted for us in the lively pages of his relative, Gerald de Barri, known to his academic associates as "Giraldus Cambrensis," or Gerald of Wales. Gerald was the son of one of the Norman settlers in Dyfed, and was born at Manorbier, near Pembroke, about 1145. Having chosen the Church as his career, he was sent to the University of Paris and there distinguished himself as a scholar and man of letters. He came back to Wales bent upon achieving renown, and, in virtue

of very remarkable qualities, attained, if not great worldly success, at least a secure niche in the temple of fame. On the strength of a grandmother's connection with the royal house of South Wales, he posed as a Welshman, and his darling ambition was to become Bishop, or, as he claimed the title should run, Archbishop of St. David's. Yet he was a bold critic of the Welsh clergy, and in many ways a typical Anglo-Norman cleric. All that can be said on this score is that he understood the Welsh people and had some sympathy with them, so that the Crown found him quite useful as an intermediary. In spite of family influence and much journeying to Rome, he was foiled in his scheme for the liberation of the Welsh Church from its subjection to Canterbury, with himself as first primate; the times were not propitious, and he had not the loyal support of his countrymen. But he has won the lasting admiration of posterity by his writings, in which keen observation, unconventional comment, and shrewd judgment are found side by side with a naïve vanity and credulity which form an agreeable foil to the more respectable qualities. Our knowledge of the background of the history of this period, of the social life of Wales, and of the personal characteristics of prince and people, is almost entirely derived from Gerald and especially from the two books, the *Itinerary* and the *Description*, which he wrote after his tour through the country in 1188 in the train of Archbishop Baldwin.

In later life, Gerald saw a new star rise above the horizon in Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, a grandson of Owain Gwynedd, who was, perhaps, the most powerful prince seen in Wales after the Norman Conquest. Under the Lord Rhys the centre of gravity of Welsh power had been in the south; Llywelyn, a native of the Conway Valley, restored its customary primacy to Gwynedd, and styled himself "prince of Aberffraw and lord of Snowdon." In his early years he had a hard struggle;

he had to contend with the rivalry of Gwenwynwyn of Powys (d. 1216), who, departing from the Angiophil policy of his house, sought to play the part of national champion; he had to meet in 1211 a most formidable onslaught from his father-in-law, King John. But, by a combination of energy and resource, he surmounted these difficulties, and, during the minority of Henry III., exploited to the full the weakness of the English government. An alliance with the Prince of Northern Powys and the conquest of the southern half of the province (our Montgomeryshire) gave him absolute control of North Wales. In 1215 he took advantage of the conflict between Crown and baronage to invade South Wales, where he assumed the overlordship of the feeble descendants of the Lord Rhys and captured castle after castle from the Norman garrison. He was as well known around Pembroke and Radnor and Swansea as in his northern homeland, and royal expeditions made little impression upon the fabric of his power. The country prospered under his enlightened rule; he was a patron of the bards, fostered the study of law, and gave liberally to the monastic orders. He died in 1240 in the Abbey of Aberconway, which he had treated with special favour, having reached a good old age and fully earned the proud title of Llywelyn the Great.

CHAPTER VI

THE ENGLISH CONQUEST

WITH all his abilities, Llywelyn the Great was not able to found a united Welsh state. He had made some provision for the future by designating as his sole successor his son David, whose mother was the daughter of King John. But David, though recognized by the Crown as Prince of Gwynedd, could obtain no more of his father's dominions, and upon his death, in 1246, Wales fell back into disunion and disorder, an easy prey to English domination. The fatal obstacle to unity was particularist zeal, which divided not only province from province, but even commote from commote, so that a prince who left several sons might be sure that each would find local supporters and a separate territorial foothold. Institutions strong enough to overcome this divisive tendency did not exist; there was no parliament, no central organization, save that of the Court. Union was only possible when one prince, by prowess in battle and force of character, was able to overtop his fellows and mount, by sheer military strength, to the foremost place. This was what happened in Gwynedd in the middle of the thirteenth century; after a period of depression following the death of David, one of his nephews, Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, defeated his brothers at the Battle of Bryn Derwin, on the confines of Eifionydd, in 1255, and from that moment embarked on a career of conquest which soon made his name as widely known in Wales as that of his illustrious namesake.

The opportunity which came to Llywelyn the Last was of the same kind as that which had turned out so greatly to the advantage of his grandfather. It was the strife between king and barons which once again

crippled the power of the English realm and opened up the way for a general rising of the Welsh under their chosen leader. The enemies of Henry III. were in no mood, with more urgent business on hand, to spend time and money upon campaigning in Wales, and thus Llywelyn was able, in a few years, to establish his authority between the Conway and the Dee, in Ceredigion and the Vale of Towy, in Builth and the Wye Valley, in Northern and Southern Powys, in Dyfed and in Gower. He signalized these triumphs by assuming a new title, that of "Prince of Wales," and took the homage as suzerain of all the lesser princes of the country. He obtained recognition of these claims from Simon de Montfort, during the earl's brief tenure of supreme power, and, even after Evesham, was in a position to extort a like acknowledgment from Henry III. in the Treaty of Montgomery (1267). At the death of Henry, the might of the Prince of Wales fully justified his title, and we may learn from the ruins of Caerphilly Castle, built at this time by the Earl of Gloucester, how formidable he seemed to the lords of Glamorgan.

But the fall of Llywelyn was as spectacular as his rise. Thinking in terms of the Barons' War, he failed to realize the new unity achieved in England under Edward I. and directly challenged that monarch's power. The result was the war of 1277, in which Edward brought the sea power of England into play and thus finally solved the problem of the conquest of Gwynedd. Llywelyn was humbled, losing most of his territory and nearly all his vassals, but he was allowed to keep his title, to marry Earl Simon's daughter, and to rule the north-west, from the Conway to the Dovey. Unhappily for himself, he did not take to heart the lesson of this first encounter, but suffered himself in 1282 to be drawn by his unstable brother David into a new conflict with his suzerain. The ensuing campaign followed the same lines as before; Anglesey,

known from its rich corn crops as "the mother of Wales," the giver of sustenance, was occupied and the Welsh driven back upon their Snowdonian fastnesses. Lest he should again be forced to surrender, Llywelyn made his way south, but he met his end on December 11 in a casual encounter fought not far from the town of Builth.

With the death of Llywelyn the doom of the House of Gwynedd was assured. It was in vain that David attempted to fill his brother's place; he commanded little support, and in 1283 was captured and put to death as a traitor. But the solution of this particular problem (no doubt for England the most urgent and menacing) did not mean that the country as a whole was brought under direct royal rule. Southern Powys had, in accordance with its traditional policy, supported the English king, and this principality, therefore, remained in the ancient stock for another quarter of a century. Rhys ap Maredudd was, on the same ground, left undisturbed in the Towy Valley until his rebellion in 1287. It was enough, in Edward's opinion, to make the power of the Crown felt in three Welsh regions, as indicated in his comprehensive "Statute of Rhuddlan" (1284). First, the principality held by Llywelyn at his death was divided into the counties of Anglesey, Caernarvonshire, and Merionethshire, under a justice of Snowdon and other officers, and with strong castles of the new "concentric" type at Caernarvon, Conway, Criccieth, and Harlech. Next, the county of Flint was brought into being, where there were similar castles at Flint and Rhuddlan; this area was treated as an annexe to the county of Chester. Lastly, the old counties of Cardigan and Carmarthen were reorganized and placed under the justice of Carmarthen. It will be seen that a great part of Wales is, under these arrangements, unaccounted for, and nothing is, in fact, more striking in the measures of Edward than the wide extension which he gave to the

system of marcher lordships. Not only were the long-standing lordships of Brecknock, Glamorgan, Gower, Kidwelly, and Pembroke left in possession of their ancient rights, but many new areas of the same type were set up, especially in North Wales. Denbighland was given to the Lacys, Ruthin to the Greys, Bromfield and Yale to the Warennes, Chirkland to the Mortimers, and Llandovery to the Giffards.

Thus did Edward reward his helpers in the great struggle with Llywelyn. He made it certain that no Welsh prince would arise again who could unite the whole country under his banner and threaten the security of the border counties. But he left Wales as isolated as ever, governed by its countless little lords and entirely divorced from the English shire system and the central courts at Westminster. For it must be realized that the marcher lords (and with them the remaining Welsh princes) owed little to the Crown save homage and the duty of defending their lands, and especially their castles, against Welsh disturbers of the peace. Within the limits of their territories they were all powerful. They appointed their own officers, including the stewards who held their courts of justice, they granted charters to boroughs and monastic houses, they drew all the profits of their lands, and even waged private war against each other. This last privilege, though justified by tradition and "the custom of the march," was naturally repugnant to the order-loving Edward, and in 1290 he took advantage of an affray near Merthyr Tydfil between the men of Glamorgan and those of Brecknock to signify his high displeasure. The two earls concerned, Gloucester and Hereford, were tried and punished for the offence, and for the time the king seemed to have established the principle that the peace must be kept in Wales as well as in the rest of his dominions. But it was only for the time; the lawless habit was too deeply rooted to be thus easily cured, and, when the

sceptre passed to the feeble hands of Edward II., it revived in all its strength.

Edward II. was born in Caernarvon, while his father was reducing the country to order. But the story of his presentation as prince to the Welsh chiefs at this time, with the ingratiating phrase, "Eich dyn" (Your man), is pure myth. The decision to revive the title of Prince of Wales and to confer it upon the heir to the Crown was not taken for many years afterwards, and, when this was done in 1301, it must be regarded as a new stroke of policy. Partly, it was a bid for popularity; during 1294-95, the king had been faced with widespread rebellion in Wales, the result of the misgovernment of his officials, and he no doubt thought it wise to heal wounded pride by some such appeal as this to popular Welsh sentiment. But more was involved than the bestowal of a title; the landed revenues of the Crown in Wales and the actual administration of the country were now transferred to the new prince, who becomes, in a sense, the first of the lords marchers. It is true that all this will from time to time revert (as in 1307) to the royal source from which it sprang, so that the principality can never develop into a power strong enough to challenge the throne, but it is a real power, nevertheless, appropriately bestowed through the ancient symbols—the golden chaplet for the head, the gold ring, and the silver rod. Edward, in short, in 1301 goes back upon the declaration in the Statute of Rhuddlan that Wales shall henceforth be directly attached to the Crown and incorporated in the English realm; he gives it once more an independent status.

CHAPTER VII

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY: GLYN DŴR

THE Edwardian settlement was, in a great measure, permanent and the fourteenth century was, for the most part, an era of peace in Wales. An exception must be made of the reign of Edward II., whose weak rule was an invitation to turbulence in all parts of his realm. There was trouble in Southern Powys, when, in 1309, under English (but not Welsh) law, the principality was carried by an heiress to a fortunate knight who became the first marcher lord of Powys. There was also trouble in Glamorgan, where the Welsh rose in arms in 1316 against a change of rule, but were defeated in battle near Caerphilly, and their leader, Llywelyn Bren, put to death. Each of the protagonists in the party struggles of England—Lancaster, the Despensers, Roger Mortimer—had a territorial interest in Wales, and it was inevitable that the country should be involved in the warfare of the time. With the restoration of order under Edward III., peaceful conditions once more prevailed, and the revival of the principality in 1343 for the Black Prince ushers in nearly sixty years of unbroken English ascendancy.

If we take a survey of the land at this point we shall be more struck by the permanent elements than by those which betoken change. Despite the continual conflict of the last hundred years, the ceaseless tide of English influence, the essential Wales remains very much the same. Political changes have only slightly affected the economic and the intellectual life of the country. Wales presents the spectacle of a land dotted over with centres of foreign activity, strategic points which are very firmly held, but it is still inhabited in the main by its ancient population, whose culture goes back to a distant past. Everywhere, the castles, partly

royal and partly baronial, indicate a military occupation which is complete, and attached to each castle is a borough, a foreign colony planted on Welsh soil, charged with the duty of supplying the needs of the garrison and generally keeping the flag of the conqueror flying. Some of these boroughs did a considerable maritime trade; Rhuddlan, Beaumaris, Carmarthen, and Haverfordwest furnished their neighbours with Eastern spices, wine from Gascony, salt, iron, and lead. But they afforded no foothold for the Welsh; even so remote a borough as Newborough, amid the Anglesey sandhills, was required to have as mayor "an Englishman and none other." Each such borough was a "little England beyond Wales."

When we turn to the native inhabitants, the significant fact is the continued importance of the old families, the class immediately below the former princes. These were the "high men," the "good men," of the days of independence, men proud of their free blood and ancient lineage, men of wealth and leisure, served by many underlings, open-handed patrons of the bards. While individuals had suffered proscription and loss of territory, it does not seem that the class had been much depressed by the political change which had passed over their heads; in the survey of the principality drawn up in 1352 they appear as rendering much the same dues and services to the Black Prince as they owed in old time to the rulers of Gwynedd. Such men were the lords of Penmynydd and Trecastell in Anglesey, descended from a Prime Minister of Llywelyn the Great, and still more famous as the stock from which sprang the House of Tudor. Mathafarn, near Machynlleth, Gogerddan, near Aberystwyth, Bronyfoel, near Criccieth, and Brynkinallt, near Chirk, to name but a few, were the ancestral homes of other gentlemen of this description. In many cases, the family survived in the male line until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,

still keenly conscious of the long pedigree; it can readily be understood how to outside observers pride of birth seemed to be a leading Welsh characteristic, and genealogical lore for a Welshman the sum of all knowledge.

The attachment of the members of this class to tradition included a steadfast adherence to the Welsh language. Of this we need no other proof than the innumerable bardic eulogies addressed to them by the poets of the day. The age was one in which Welsh literature, both in poetry and in prose, bore rich fruit; its linguistic canons, both in orthography and metre, are still regarded with respect by modern Welsh scholars. We accept it as natural that, during the epoch of independent rule, the princes should have had minstrels to celebrate their victories and sing dirges to the slain. This was so; poets like Gwalchmai and Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd were to be found who treated ancient themes with freshness and grace, and whose verse justifies what has been said of the Celtic sense of beauty and feeling for Nature. What is more remarkable is that there was no break as a result of the English conquest. The "massacre of the bards" is another Edwardian myth; though it has received its apotheosis in the immortal lines of Gray, history cannot acknowledge it, for the evidence is that the stream of poesy still flowed on unchecked, with this difference only, that it was no longer addressed to the prince, but to the "innate gentleman." A revolution, indeed, took place, but a peaceful and literary one; in the days of Edward III., a cleric from Ceredigion, who led the vagrant life of a troubadour, taught the Welsh muse to come down from its pedestal. Rejecting the older, elaborate metres in favour of the simple couplet of the *cywydd*, he celebrated, not war and prowess, but love and the charm of Nature in lines which blend humour and fancy with grace of imagery and diction. Soon all Welsh poets were imitating Dafydd ap Gwilym, and

his influence is not yet spent. Prose was also written from about 1200 on—the romances known as the *Mabinogion*, embodying Arthurian and other traditions, chronicles, legal texts, pious translations, story books, manuals for preachers. The existence of this mass of literature, no longer handed down by oral tradition, but preserved in written texts, testifies to a reading public and to a standard of literary Welsh understood in all parts of the country.

Not all Welshmen were homekeeping. Many went to Rome to advance their fortune as ecclesiastics; some went on pilgrimage to Santiago, and great numbers of scholars found their way to Oxford and Cambridge. But it was the profession of arms which chiefly attracted them from their native country. English kings were glad to enlist the services of the lancemen of North Wales and the famous archers of the south; it was through this means that the long bow became the characteristic weapon of the English army. Crowds of Welshmen, in their green and white uniform, followed the Black Prince to the field of Crecy, and there was a tradition that it was on this occasion that the leek was first worn as a national emblem. One distinguished Welsh warrior fought on the French side; this was Owain of the Red Hand, a great-great-grandson of Llywelyn the Great, who, in pursuance of a feud with the English Government, offered his sword to the King of France and claimed the title of Prince of Wales. His attempted invasion of Wales in 1370 came to nothing, but he rendered valuable service to the French cause until his assassination in 1378 by an English agent. So romantic a figure was not forgotten by popular legend; like Arthur, he was fabled to be sleeping with his men in a secret cavern, whence in good time he would issue to avenge the wrongs of his countrymen.

It was another Owain who, in the next generation, gave reality to this dream and asserted the rights of

Wales in armed insurrection. His appearance in the field was sudden, and, at first sight, it is not easy to see why the peace of the preceding years should, on a day in 1400, have, as at the sound of a trumpet, given way to strife. The Lord of Glyn Dyfrdwy was the direct representative of the princes of Northern Powys; his ancestors had saved from the wreck of that principality two regions between the Tanat and the Dee, which they ruled as barons of the march in modest affluence. Through his mother, Owain Glyn Dŵr—to give him his popular Welsh designation—also represented the line of South Wales, so that his dynastic claims were of considerable account. He had, however, under Richard II. been a perfectly loyal subject, had fought for that king in various campaigns, and does not seem to have been specially disturbed by the accession of Henry IV. in 1399. Why in the following autumn he should have assembled his friends at his manor house on the Dee, have raised the standard of revolt, and wasted with fire and sword the English settlements of North-Eastern Wales, is far from clear. At bottom, the quarrel was one between him and his neighbour, Reginald Grey of Ruthin, and it was Henry's support of his friend Grey which lifted the struggle between two marcher lords on to the old footing of a trial of strength between the Welsh and the Crown. The cardinal error of the Government was that they underestimated both the personal qualities of Glyn Dŵr and the strength of the popular sentiment to which, as a prince of the old blood, he could appeal. For some years the rebellion, though widespread, might have been brought to an end by personal concessions to the leader, but the obstinacy of the king allowed Owain no loophole of escape and drove him into deeper and deeper waters, until the issue came to be nothing less than the political independence of Wales.

In the fifteen years' struggle which followed the out-

break of September, 1400, Glyn Dŵr had the initial advantage of fighting a monarch who was very insecurely seated on his throne and who had enemies on every side. He appealed to the Irish, to the Scotch, and, in this case with very substantial results, to the French. Charles VI. gave a warm welcome to his envoys, and in 1405 despatched to his aid an army of 3,000 men. Even more valuable was the moral and material support which he received from Henry's discontented subjects. Hotspur, Archbishop Scrope, and Northumberland were all in league with the Welsh insurgents; a king so beset with foes could not concentrate upon the Welsh problem. Glyn Dŵr further showed great military skill; he utilized fully the help to be derived from the difficult nature of the country, and not one of the king's expeditions into Wales came within sight of ending the rebellion. While skilfully avoiding capture himself, he took, in 1402, two notable prisoners; first, his arch-enemy, Grey, fell into his hands, only to be released on payment of an enormous ransom; then, Edmund Mortimer, whose nephew was being kept out of the succession by Henry, from a prisoner became a son-in-law and an ally and served the Welsh cause until his death at the siege of Harlech.

With these advantages and the enthusiastic backing of crowds of followers in North and South Wales, Glyn Dŵr raised himself for a brief period into the position of being the effective ruler of the country. He captured the castles of Harlech and Aberystwyth, held parliaments at the former place and at Machynlleth, appointed bishops, issued pardons under his great seal, entered into a formal alliance with France, and negotiated with the Pope of Avignon. His plans for the future of the country show breadth of vision and imagination, and, if in the famous Tripartite Indenture, which envisaged a Wales that had swallowed up the border counties, he was somewhat over-sanguine in his hopes, his scheme for achieving the independence

of the Welsh Church had much to recommend it. With the aid of the French Pope, St. David's was to recover its old primacy, Welsh Church revenues were to be kept within the borders of Wales, none but Welshmen were to be appointed to Welsh sees and livings, and two universities were to be established, in North and South Wales, for the future education of the Welsh clergy.

But all this came to nothing. The French expedition proved a disappointment; though the allied armies marched through the west and threatened the gates of Worcester, they failed to shake the king's power and left the situation unaltered. As the general position of the House of Lancaster grew less precarious, there was more leisure to deal with Wales; in 1408 the young Prince Henry took Aberystwyth, and not long afterwards Harlech fell, so that Glyn Dŵr was thrown back once more upon the life of the outlaw. His courage was unabated, but the cause was hopelessly lost; in 1416 he died in some obscure hiding-place, and the struggle was at an end. For ages the memory of his gallant fight for the freedom of Wales from alien rule lived among the common people, and many a tale of his heroic achievements was told around peasant hearths, where his name was cherished as that of a second Arthur.

If we regard the Glyn Dŵr movement as a political enterprise, it must be reckoned a total failure. The storm which passed over the country left it, as before, a land under English rule, partly exercised by the Crown and partly by the barons of the march. But there were two important results, of which the one was sentimental and the other economic. On the one hand, the revolt gave a new strength and cohesion to Welsh national feeling; on the other, it struck a heavy blow at the material prosperity of the country. It is not too much to say that it was the experience of these fifteen years which first taught the Welsh to regard

themselves as a separate nation, marked off from the English by the use of a distinct language, and it is in accord with this that the fifteenth century is a flourishing epoch in Welsh literature, productive of poets and prose writers, an era in which there was much study and copying of old manuscripts and great devotion to the subtleties of the bardic craft. The twenty-four metres which have long formed the canon of writers of "strict" Welsh verse were reduced to their final form in this age by Dafydd ab Edmwnt of Wepre in Flintshire, who was the leading bardic figure in the latter half of the century. Equally certain is it that the economic consequences were disastrous. Not only did lords of manors lose their rents and services during the years of disturbance; they were hardly in better case when order had been restored, for houses, barns, fences, and mills had been destroyed, tenants had disappeared, confidence had come to an end. In the Vale of Conway, it was said, the devastation was so terrible that "green grass grew on the market-place in Llanrwst and the deer fled into the churchyard."

As the country was slowly and painfully recovering from its troubles, a new source of conflict arose in the strife between York and Lancaster. Baronial quarrels in England never failed to extend into Wales, where every great lord had his castles and retainers and tenants, and where the traditions of the country were favourable to the settlement of disputes by force of arms. Thus it came about that the thirty years covered by the Wars of the Roses were an epoch of unrest and warfare in Wales and the marches to an even greater degree than across the border. The Duke of York had inherited, with the claim to the Crown, the wide domains of the Mortimers; he was master of Denbigh, Newtown, Ludlow, Wigmore, Clifford, Builth, Usk, and Caerleon. This group of lordships, solidly massed along the border, gave him a dominant position in Wales, and it was in the heart of this region that his

son Edward won, on February 2, 1461, the Battle of Mortimer's Cross, which did much to place the Yorkist dynasty on the throne. Nevertheless, the Lancastrian interest also had its points of vantage in Wales. The king controlled the principality and its castles, as well as the old Lancaster estates at Ogmere, Monmouth, and Kidwelly. He had, moreover, the support of the Tudors, who now for the first time appear in general English history. Owen ap Maredudd ap Tudur, an Anglesey squire of the stock of Penmynydd, won the favour of Catherine, widow of Henry V., and secretly wedded her; the children, after a period of neglect, were taken up by their half-brother, Henry VI., who created Edmund, Earl of Richmond, and Jasper, Earl of Pembroke. Edmund married Margaret Beaufort, but died in 1456, some months before the birth of their son Henry in Pembroke Castle. Jasper lived to see his nephew crowned King of England, and throughout his life, amid many changes of fortune, proved a trusty supporter and champion of the young man's claims. Hence, though the Yorkist party had many powerful adherents in Wales, such as William Herbert of Raglan, founder of that famous clan, who was killed at Banbury in 1469, Welsh sympathy ultimately veered round to the Lancastrian side. It was long remembered how Harlech, under a Welsh captain who had learnt his craft in the French wars, had held out for seven years on behalf of the dethroned king.

CHAPTER VIII

TUDOR RULE

THE accession of Henry VII. in 1485 was a decisive event in the history of the relations between England and Wales. While for England it signified the triumph of Lancaster over York and—still more important—the establishment of order and peace after a generation of turmoil, it had for Wales quite another meaning. Henry was by ancestry the representative of an ancient Welsh house; born in Wales and nursed by a Welsh foster-mother, he probably spoke the native language. In the vindication of his rights he had landed in Milford Haven, making his first appeal to his own countrymen and gathering large numbers of them around him in the course of his progress to the west. It was inevitable that Welshmen should regard his triumph as their own and envisage Bosworth as a glorious reversal of centuries of subjection and defeat. Foreign observers did not fail to notice this result of the victory; “the Welsh,” remarks one of them, “may be said to have recovered their independence, for Henry VII. is a Welshman.” What is remarkable is that the king took no small pains to emphasize his Welsh connections, realizing, no doubt, that a contented Wales would be a valuable asset to him in the difficult task he had before him. He entered London with the red dragon of Cadwaladr waving before him, and made the dragon one of the supporters of the royal arms. He enrolled many Welshmen in his new bodyguard, the well-known Yeomen of the Guard, and clothed the corps in the Welsh colours of green and white. He gave to his eldest son the ancient British name of Arthur, and conferred upon him at a tender age the principality of Wales. When reflections were cast upon his origin, he had his pedigree specially in-

vestigated by Welsh heralds, and his ancestry deduced from the most illustrious princes of bygone Wales. He richly rewarded his Welsh followers, notably Sir Rhys ap Thomas, who had thrown his great influence in West Wales into the scale upon Henry's landing, and even the bards who sang his praises were not allowed to exercise their art in vain.

Thus was a reconciliation effected, after centuries of strife, between England and Wales. It was long ere the change of temper led to its natural result in constitutional reform. Wales under Henry VII. was as turbulent as ever, with power in the hands of the local gentry, who took full advantage of the conflict of jurisdiction produced by the marcher system. The council of the Prince of Wales attempted, under Arthur, his brother Henry and Mary, to establish some sort of order, working from Ludlow as a centre, but without very much success. At last, Thomas Cromwell appointed in 1534 a president of his own ruthless temper, who in a few years entirely altered the aspect of affairs, so that writers in the Elizabethan age were able to say that Wales was as peaceable and well governed as any part of the English realm. "If our fathers were now living," remarked George Owen, the Pembrokeshire antiquary, in 1594, "they would think it some strange country, inhabited with a foreign nation—so altered is the country and countrymen." Rowland Lee's policy was to strike terror into the hearts of those who lived by plunder by wholesale executions, and in the pursuance of this end he paid not the slightest regard to birth, wealth, or influence. Whether this fierce repression would by itself have produced the later transformation may possibly be open to doubt, but it was accompanied by a measure of reform—the great Act of Union of 1536. This enactment had a double aspect, and accordingly has been variously regarded by Welsh patriots. On the one hand, it ended the political isolation of Wales by merging it in the English constitu-

tional system; it treated the Welsh language as an anomaly that ought to disappear. On the other, it swept away the privileges of the lords marchers, divided the whole of Wales and the Marches into shire ground, and provided for the representation of the new and the old counties, with their boroughs, in the House of Commons. Rowland Lee was by no means pleased with this scheme for giving the Welsh the same liberties as were enjoyed across the border. "If one thief shall try another," he pithily put it, "all we have here begun is foredone." But his protests only delayed the operation of the Act for a few years; it was confirmed in 1542; and the country gentlemen of Wales thereupon recovered, as sheriffs, members of parliament, and justices of the peace, the power they had irregularly exercised in the old days of confusion.

With age-long barriers removed and a friendly dynasty on the throne, the Welsh upper classes now found new careers opening up for them in England. The latter half of the sixteenth century saw a great influx of Welshmen into the sister country. Humphrey Llwyd of Denbigh, writing in 1568, describes them as well educated, physically and mentally alert, proud of their lineage and averse to menial labour, but capable lawyers and accomplished courtiers. With these qualities they made rapid headway in Church and State. Queen Elizabeth was served by a chief minister of Welsh descent, for Burleigh was one of the Cecils of Allt yr Ynys on the Monnow, and kept in touch with the ancestral home until his death. Four Welsh clerics in succession became Bishops of Sodor and Man, while two Welshmen between them filled the Deanery of Westminster for almost the whole of the period from the accession of Elizabeth to the death of Charles I. Salisburys and Thelwalls from the Vale of Clwyd, Hollands from the Conway Valley, Parrys from the Herefordshire border, Herberts of Powysland, and Stradlings of Glamorgan, made their way to

the Court and the capital and achieved renown in various walks of life. Two famous goldsmiths of the City of London in the reign of James I. drew their origin from Wales—viz., John Williams of Beddgelert and Hugh Myddleton of Denbigh, the latter well known as the man who furnished the City at great cost with the water supply of the New River. It was an age when Welshmen were in favour; Shakespeare might make merry over their broken English and their amusing foibles, but the portraits of Fluellen and Sir Hugh Evans are drawn with the utmost good humour and with no malice against their countrymen. When Ben Jonson asks, in *For the Honour of Wales* (1618), "Whence hath the Crown in all times better servitors, more liberal of their lives and fortunes?" he is but echoing the Elizabethan tradition, the fashionable attitude under the last of the Tudors.

Meanwhile, the homeland received little benefit from the success of its sons. Though less harassed by disorder and rapine, it remained poor and predominantly pastoral. Hugh Myddleton opened up the lead mines of North Cardiganshire, and thereby was enabled to finance his London enterprise; but, apart from this, little use was made of the mineral wealth of the country. Its two principal exports were cattle and cloth. The former, bred on the wide mountain pastures, were sent into England in great droves and disposed of at fairs such as that of Barnet, and the trade was of such consequence as to make the drovers a substantial and responsible class, who were constantly employed, in the absence of all other facilities, to convey large sums of money to and from the Metropolis. Sheep innumerable supplied the material for Welsh cloth, rough friezes and flannels, which were woven in many a Welsh peasant home and carried on the backs of mountain ponies to a centre where they could be finished and dyed for general sale. The merchants of Shrewsbury took the lion's share of

this product of the central uplands, and fought hard to protect its profits against the inroads of rivals such as Oswestry and Welshpool. It was a lucrative business for the middleman, but did not greatly enrich the simple hill folk who furnished its basis.

In matters of religion it was inevitable that Wales should be drawn into the orbit of its powerful neighbour. Its first experience of the new order was the break-up of the monasteries. These were not great houses, and hardly any of them reached the £200 limit of annual income which gave the larger abbeys a short respite. But they were fairly numerous and filled a conspicuous place in the life of the countryside. The bardic literature of the day shows that they were homes of Welsh culture; Basingwerk, Valle Crucis, Strata Marcella, Strata Florida, and Neath gave shelter to Welsh poets and received their tribute of verse. As in England, the forfeited lands went to enrich the local gentry and to set new families on their feet; the Mansels appeared at Margam, the Fowlers at Cwm Hir, the Stedmans at Strata Florida. Brecon Priory fell to a Welshman, Sir John Price, one of Cromwell's agents in the business of closing the monasteries, who became secretary to the Council of Wales. In this way the proportion of the ancient revenue of the Welsh Church which was spent upon Church purposes in Wales itself, already none too large, was still further reduced; tithes, as well as landed property, passed into the hands of laymen, and the country clergy fell into a state of poverty not very favourable to learning or devotion. It was typical of the state of the country that the transition from the old religion to the new came about without any marked commotion or upheaval. Under Mary, Bishop Ferrar of St. David's was burnt at the stake in Carmarthen town, while a number of fervent Catholics sought safety abroad during the Elizabethan persecutions; but most Welshmen were content to fall in with the

humour of the Government of the day and to take their religion from the superior powers.

There were many who thought that the salvation of Wales lay in the universal adoption of English and who were willing to sacrifice to this policy the religious needs of the country. To make them Englishmen, the Welsh were to have none but an English Bible and an English Prayer-Book. Fortunately, there were others who took a saner and more generous view, men whose self-denying labours have won for them the undying gratitude of the Welsh people. First in the rank stands Sir John Price, who in 1546 issued the earliest printed book in the language, a primer of devotions (*Yn y llyvyr hwn*), expressly intended for the many who could read Welsh but not English or Latin. Close upon his heels came another literary lawyer, William Salesbury of Llanrwst, to whom we owe the first Welsh version of the New Testament (1567) and the first Welsh issue of the Book of Common Prayer (1567). The active ally and helper of Salesbury was Richard Davies, Bishop of St. David's, who stands out in this period as a learned and able prelate, sincerely concerned for the welfare of his fellow-countrymen. Of like spirit was William Morgan, a native of the Conway Valley, who died Bishop of St. Asaph, after having conferred upon the nation the inestimable boon of a translation of the entire Bible into Welsh (1588). Morgan was a sounder Welsh scholar than Salesbury, and it resulted that his version, as revised by Bishop Parry (1620), with the help of Dr. John Davies of Mallwyd, won a secure place in the affections of the Welsh people and provided a fresh starting-point in the development of Welsh prose style. It is hard to say whether Welsh piety or Welsh literature owes more to Morgan, whose name is revered by all sorts and conditions of Welshmen.

This school of translators, among whom must also

be reckoned Edmund Prys, Archdeacon of Merioneth and author of the Welsh metrical version of the Psalms (1621), was in close touch with the old bardic tradition, and thus its work kept alive the linguistic and literary standards of bygone days. Tudor times witnessed much activity in bardic circles. So large was the number of those who claimed to be poets or musicians that it became necessary to regulate the craft. The gentlemen of North Wales who were interested in the art obtained royal authority, first from Henry VIII. and later from Elizabeth, for the holding of two *Eisteddfodau*, or bardic congresses, at which, in 1523 and 1568, trial was made before competent judges of the skill of all who professed bardism, and degrees and certificates were awarded. Those who failed to qualify were admonished to seek their living in some other way and were forbidden to appeal to the generosity of the public. In this way the genuine practitioners were separated from the charlatans and the dignity was maintained of an order which was concerned, not only for artistry in verse and song, but also for accurate genealogy and heraldry and the preservation of ancient texts.

CHAPTER IX

PURITAN AND CAVALIER

WHEN James I. became king, the Tudor dragon was deposed from its position as a supporter of the royal arms, and its place was taken by the Scottish unicorn. It was thus by a symbol made plain that the special

favour hitherto shown towards Wales had come to an end, and that Tudor patronage was to give room to Stuart neglect. The change of atmosphere took some time to make itself felt; John Williams of Conway could still rise to the dignity of Bishop of Lincoln and Archbishop of York, and as late as 1634 Milton can refer, in terms of compliment, to the Welsh as

An old and haughty nation, proud in arms.

But the star of the Welsh people was no longer in the ascendant. Princes of Wales were created—Henry in 1610 and Charles, on the death of his elder brother, in 1616—but neither visited his principality; the Council of Wales and the Marches, which was nominally the prince's instrument for the government of the country, declined in power and importance, until it became little more than a useful intermediary between the local tribunals and the King's Council at Whitehall. In England the middle class, raised to prosperity by commercial enterprise, was preparing to contest with the Crown the right to direct the fortunes of the country. In Wales there were few evidences of this change of social equilibrium; society there resolved itself into a poor and helpless peasantry and a powerful upper class of country squires, who were falling more and more under the sway of English influences.

It can easily be understood that this soil was not favourable to the growth of Puritanism—the characteristic English movement of the early seventeenth century. Welsh Dissent is accustomed to look back to John Penry as its pioneer and protomartyr. Born at Cefn Brith in the uplands of Breconshire, Penry was educated in the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford and became an ardent Puritan pamphleteer. It was his especial concern that the Gospel should be preached in the mountains of Wales, a task which, he thought,

even laymen might undertake. At first he worked in concert with the English Presbyterian party, but after a visit to Scotland he changed his views, joined the Separatist congregation in London, and is thus reckoned the first Welsh Independent. By his attacks upon the existing Church order, he aroused fierce antagonism, and in 1593 was tried and executed. Notwithstanding the interest and sympathy aroused by his life and writings in later times, Penry was, in his own day, an isolated figure among Welshmen, without associates or followers; it is strange to think that the archbishop who pursued him to his death was the prelate of whom Bishop Morgan speaks with gratitude in 1588 as one of his notable helpers. Welsh Puritanism—a feeble plant in the days before the Civil War—grew slowly under James I. and Charles I.; it is chiefly found in South Wales and along the border, in regions affected by contact with England, at Llanfaches, near Caerwent, the home of the first Independent church set up in Wales, at Cardiff, and at Wrexham. The first blast of the trumpet of war scattered this handful of Puritans in all directions.

For there could be no question as to the side which Wales would elect to follow when the conflict broke out between Parliament and the Crown. The tradition of loyalty established under the Tudors, the lack of any particular reverence for English common law, the weakness of Welsh Puritanism, all made it inevitable that the gentlemen of Wales should be royalists. In the early stages of the war, Wales—except Pembroke-shire, where Essex had influence—was held firmly for the king; large bodies of troops were raised in the country and fought, on the whole with little success, in the royal service. A serious threat to North Wales in November, 1643, was countered by bringing over from Ireland English troops which had been sent to the country to suppress the rising of 1641. But as the war advanced, the royalist position grew less secure.

The leaders who were at first put in authority in Wales were careful to consider local interests and prejudices; they were succeeded by men who rode roughshod over the country and alienated the sympathy of high and low alike. When Fortune frowned upon the king and, after Naseby, he was thrown back upon the resources of the west, it could be seen that the loyalty of the Welsh had cooled. The case of Archbishop Williams is typical of many another. He had fortified his native town of Conway at great cost and held it stoutly for Charles, until superseded by Sir John Owen of Clenennau. The men of the Conway Valley had no love for those of Eifionydd, with whom they had long waged hereditary feuds; hence it is no marvel that Williams took umbrage at the change and finally in 1646, when the king himself had abandoned the struggle, gave active help to the Parliamentary force which was striving to reduce Owen to submission. The Welsh fortresses were among the latest to surrender, and the last incident of the Civil War was the capitulation in March, 1647, of Harlech Castle, held by Sir John Owen's brother William.

Nowhere did the Commonwealth rule assume a more markedly military character than in Wales. Authority passed from the old aristocracy, the scions of ancient families, to upstarts from England or Wales who had fought for the triumph of Parliament and now reaped their reward. The tendency became still more pronounced after the Second Civil War of 1648, a struggle in which Wales was prominently concerned, and which brought Cromwell himself into the field for the reduction of Pembroke. Among the new men were Colonel Philip Jones of Swansea, a trusted counsellor of Cromwell's, Colonel John Jones of Maes y Garnedd, who suffered in 1660 for his share in the king's death, and Bussy Mansel of Briton Ferry, one of the six members for Wales in "Barebone's Parliament." It may be said that, as the result of the

Civil War, Wales lost the virtual independence it had hitherto enjoyed and came directly under English rule. In 1650 the Long Parliament passed "an Act for the better propagation and preaching of the Gospel in Wales," the purpose of which was to provide a Puritan ministry for a country in which it had hitherto found hardly any place. Clergymen were ejected from their livings who in conduct or in opinion did not conform to Puritan standards, and an attempt was made to fill their place with men who in this respect were not open to exception. Such were, however, not easy to find in Wales, and it became necessary to set on foot a system of travelling preachers, who made up by itinerant ministrations for the want in many parishes of a settled ministry. It was by these authorized itinerants that the foundation was laid of Welsh Non-conformity; they made converts whose devotion to the Puritan cause survived the catastrophe of the Restoration, and their names are still held in honour and esteem. From Vavasor Powell of Knucklas, an unbending republican, from Walter Cradock of Usk, a supporter of Cromwell's rule, from John Miles, founder of the first Welsh Baptist Church at Ilston, in Gower and, above all, from the mystic Morgan Lloyd of Wrexham, groups of Welshmen here and there learnt to speak the language of Puritanism and set a fresh current going in the religious life of the country. A legacy of the period still treasured by the lovers of nervous Welsh prose is Lloyd's *Book of the Three Birds* (1653), in which to the Raven and the Dove, the carnal and the elect, of Jacob Boehme was added the Eagle, signifying the civil power.

With the Restoration Wales returned to its old political colour; its representatives in the Convention Parliament were almost to a man supporters of Episcopacy and the Crown. Puritanism was proscribed, and its adherents became a persecuted minority. But, while the country gentry thus recovered their former

prestige and power, the tide of national life flowed more feebly. Welsh literature sank to a low ebb, and the old bardic tradition, still fairly vigorous in the time of Edmund Prys, came very near perishing. Rhys Prichard, the royalist vicar of Llandovery, threw his moral and religious exhortations into rough, popular verse, which after his death obtained a wide currency under the name of *The Welshmen's Candle*; using the dialect of his native county, he gained the ear of the unlettered, but from a literary point of view the work of the "Old Vicar" marks a complete break with the past. Huw Morris, the farmer-poet of the Ceiriog Valley, has greater pretensions to literary skill, but in him there is a notable decline from the old artistry. His political opinions reflect very accurately those of the class to which he belonged—the richer peasantry, untouched alike by Puritanism and the vices of the Court. He celebrates the praises of Monk, describes with gusto the downfall of Oliver's soldiery, waxes indignant at the Rye House Plot, rejoices at the acquittal of Bishop Lloyd of St. Asaph, and lives to congratulate William III. upon the naval victory of La Hougue. The Wales of Huw Morris was pious, Protestant, loyal to Church and Constitution, but simple and unadventurous, with little consciousness of an historic past.

There was, however, another strain in the life of the nation, in numbers insignificant, but full of promise for the future. To the Puritans of the Commonwealth, a strange medley of visionaries and self-seekers, earnest dreamers and wily politicians, succeeded the Puritans of the later Stuarts, a band of men and women whose deep religious convictions were sharpened and hardened by a relentless persecution. Figures on record for 1676 suggest that at that time they cannot in Wales have exceeded 5 per cent. of the population; in some regions, such as Anglesey, there were virtually none. But their congregations,

recognized for a brief space of time under the Indulgence of 1672, supplied the basis of the older Welsh Dissent, and many an Independent and Baptist church of to-day represents in unbroken succession the little communities which gathered, despite the frowns of neighbours and the penalties of the Conventicle Act, in the houses of sympathizers during this period. The connection with English Nonconformity was close; it was still in South Wales and along the border that the movement was most in evidence. In persuasion these Dissenters were chiefly Independents; the Presbyterian creed, with its stress upon the parochial system and a learned ministry, made no great appeal to Welshmen, and the Strict Baptists were not as yet a powerful body. The Quakers had found a foothold in Wales as early as the Commonwealth days; at one time they were influential in Montgomeryshire and Merionethshire, and a difficult problem in Welsh religious history is raised by their disappearance in the eighteenth century from these regions. Emigration to Pennsylvania supplies a partial solution, but a deeper reason may perhaps be found in the want of congruity between the austere Quaker ideal and the emotions of a quick, impulsive race.

CHAPTER X

THE METHODIST REVIVAL

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the stage was set for the movement which beyond any other has made the Welsh people what it is to-day. In its

ultimate effects, the Methodist revival was far more than a religious upheaval; through its agency the political and cultural life of Wales was raised to a new level—a new language and a new literature were evolved, new habits altered the routine of daily life, new organizations came into being, and a new social atmosphere was created. The Wales of Victoria differed as widely from that of Anne as did the latter from the Britain of Boudicca.

To the troubles of the Stuart times had now succeeded an era of calm. Defoe passed through the country in 1722 and bears witness to the general prosperity of the people. He found the Welsh gentlemen "civil, hospitable, and kind"; as of yore, they "valued themselves much upon their antiquity," and "had preserved their families entire for many ages." Trade still ran in the old channels; the county of Cardigan was "said to be the nursery or breeding-place," for cattle, of all England south of the Trent, while at Wrexham there was "a great market for Welsh flannel, which the factors buy up of the poor Welsh people." At this town he notes, with the natural curiosity of a Dissenter, the existence of "two large meeting houses"; we are thus reminded that, by the Toleration Act, Nonconformity had now attained a legal status and was able to build for itself places of worship. Other evidence shows that it was still weak in numbers, and, except for Carmarthenshire, flourished chiefly where there was active intercourse with England. The Church was strongly Tory, but, on the whole, well disposed to the Protestant succession; Lloyd of St. Asaph stands out as the only bishop of the famous seven who conformed under William III., and among the lower Welsh clergy the vast majority followed his example. There was more regard for the old dynasty among the landed proprietors; societies were formed in North and South Wales in the interest of the Pretender, and a notable Jacobite leader

was the first Sir Watkin Williams Wynn of Wynn-stay, for thirty-three years M.P. for Denbighshire. But neither in 1715 nor in 1745 was any active help from Wales afforded to the invading army and Welsh Jacobitism was soon but a memory.

Such was the Wales which has been mirrored for the Welshmen of all time in the *Visions of the Sleeping Bard* (1703) of Ellis Wynne, a threefold vision of the world, death, and hell in which the greatest master of Welsh prose satirizes the greed, the folly, the hypocrisy, and the irreligion of the society he saw around him. Like all denouncers of evil, he paints an unduly gloomy picture, but the time was certainly ripe for a genuine religious reform, such as came in the next generation. And of this the roots are to be found in the philanthropic labours of the previous seventy years. A succession of earnest workers had been gravely concerned at the low state of religion and education among the monoglot Welsh peasantry, and had sought, each in his own way, to apply a remedy. First comes Stephen Hughes of Meidrym in Carmarthenshire, an ejected Puritan minister who during the period of persecution was able to enlist the support of benevolent churchmen on behalf of the issue of pious literature in the Welsh language. It was Hughes who enshrined in the security of print the fugitive verse of Vicar Prichard, and among his helpers was a future Bishop of St. David's. In the next generation, Sir John Phillips of Picton is a conspicuous figure in the charitable activities of the newly founded Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge; a wealthy Pembrokeshire landowner, he saw to it that Wales was not left out of account in the work of the Society, and not only assisted the publication of devotional books in Welsh, but also established schools in which children, as a necessary preliminary, were taught to read the language. The most famous of these benefactors was, however, the

third in order of time, Griffith Jones (1683-1761), Rector of Llanddowror in Carmarthenshire, whose work, like that of Bishop Morgan, has received the benediction alike of churchman and nonconformist. His activity was a direct offshoot of that of Phillips, to whom he owed his living and whose sister he married; it was a crusade on behalf of evangelical and personal religion, which began as eloquent preaching, but developed later into the organization of a remarkable system of schools. Co-operating, where it was possible, with his fellow-clergy, he sent a schoolmaster for three winter months to each parish, hoping by this intensive method to teach large numbers of young and old to read the Welsh Bible, as well as the catechism of the Church. Funds for the maintenance of teachers and scholars were drawn from England, and Jones had also a valuable local supporter in "Madame Bevan" of Laugharne, who kept the system in being after his death. How precisely he stood in regard to the rising tide of Methodism is not easy to say; on the one hand, he was careful to keep his system of "circulating schools" clear of any open connection with the movement; on the other hand, he was the trusted friend and adviser of its leaders, and, though their ways were not always his, was of a like mind and spirit. Beyond a doubt, his schools created a medium in which the revival could grow and flourish; he taught the Welsh peasant to read the Bible and thus prepared him to receive the evangelical appeal. How profoundly the movement had affected Wales may be judged from the fact that at his death it was estimated that 150,000 scholars had passed through his schools.

The key to the success of the Methodist revival is not difficult to find; for the first time since the Protestant Reformation, it made emotion the centre of religion and thus instantly appealed to a race whose religious impulses had been cramped by inadequate

forms of expression. Neither the seemliness and order of the Church nor the solid reasoning of the Dissenters had power to stir the heart of the Welsh commonalty as did this "enthusiasm," so obnoxious to the rational thought of the day. No new doctrines were proclaimed, nor did the leaders, in spite of the coldness and active discouragement of their ecclesiastical superiors, ever contemplate leaving the National Church. But they were resolved, in their consuming passion for the saving of souls, to employ any and every means of carrying out their mission—itinerant preaching, open-air services, popular singing, private societies for mutual edification. Three men are conspicuous in the early history of the movement. Daniel Rowlands (1713-90) spent the whole of his life at Llangeitho in Cardiganshire, where his family held the living; he himself was never more than a curate, and latterly was without any standing in the Church. But from the year 1735, in which he came under the spell of Griffith Jones, until his death, he was in the forefront of the revival, attracting great crowds to Llangeitho from all parts of Wales to listen to his impassioned preaching and recognized as the natural head of the movement. A younger colleague was William Williams (1716-91) of Pantycelyn in Carmarthenshire. Brought up as a Dissenter, Williams turned in early youth to the Church and took deacon's orders, but his further progress was stopped by his devotion to Methodist ideals. In 1743, he resigned his curacy and withdrew to the family estate; he now devoted himself to itinerant work, and for close upon half a century was as diligently employed in this task as John Wesley himself. Great as were his services, however, in this respect, they are far transcended by those which he rendered as the poet of the movement. He began in 1744 to issue little collections of original hymns for use in Methodist circles, and soon proved himself not merely a facile writer in this kind

of composition, but also a poetic genius of the highest order. The hymns of "Pantycelyn" are now the common heritage of Welsh religion, known and sung wherever the Welsh language is spoken; they hold a great place in Welsh literature also, as furnishing the model for lyrical verse in the "free" metres, not bound by the iron rules of the old bardic craft. The lyric poets of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from John Ceiriog Hughes (d. 1887) to Eliseus Williams, better known as "Eifion Wyn" (d. 1926), are the legitimate heirs of the sweet singer of Methodism.

But the most striking figure in the movement was Howel Harris (1714-73). He came of a talented Breconshire family; one brother rose to be assay master of the Mint, another made a fortune as an army contractor. Howel was from the first attracted to religion, but never took orders; his evangelistic work was done entirely in the capacity of a layman. The first impulse to a dedicated life came to him in 1735; in the following year, he visited Griffith Jones, and in the next made the acquaintance of Daniel Rowlands. The fire was now well alight; Harris embarked upon an itinerant ministry, preaching with extraordinary power throughout the length and breadth of Wales. "Societies" of converts were formed, each with an "exhorter" at its head, while in 1742 an "association" met as a central authority to regulate the whole system. Not long after, troubles arose in the infant community; it was divided by a schism between the followers of Rowlands and those of Harris. Various reasons, theological and other, have been assigned as the cause of this separation; there can be little doubt that one element was the infatuation of Harris for "Madam Griffith," by birth a Wynn of Foelas and by marriage a Griffith of Cefn Amwlch, who had assumed a prominent position in the movement. The death of this lady in 1752 ended the unhappy interlude; Harris regained the esteem of his brethren, but

abandoned his work as itinerant and Methodist organizer, and started life afresh as the head of a singular establishment which he set up on his own property at Trefecca. Men, women, and children were gathered together in an industrial community which was, under strict Methodist discipline, to provide for the needs of the neighbourhood. Here Harris ended his days, still faithful to Methodist ideals, but also busy as agricultural reformer, and, strangest of all, as captain of the local militia. He has been acclaimed as the greatest Welshman of the century; although his organization went to pieces during the schism, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of his work as a pioneer.

Welsh and English Methodism came into being independently, but common interests soon drew them closely together. The Welsh leaders were Calvinists, and for this reason their relations with Wesley, though always cordial, were never intimate. By a tacit understanding, Wesley left to them the work among the Welsh-speaking population, and no Welsh Wesleyan causes were established during his lifetime. With the Calvinist Whitefield, the connection was much closer; the "Association" of Watford (1743) combined in one body the Welsh and the English adherents of Calvinist Methodism, with Whitefield as president and Harris as his deputy. All were agreed upon the necessity of remaining, so far as the sacraments were concerned, within the bounds of the Church of England; nothing was to be done which would make the Methodist body a Nonconformist sect. It remains to be added that, nevertheless, Nonconformity received a great accession of strength through the movement. Though some of the Dissenting ministers had as little love for it as the average country parson, others gave it a warm welcome and were glad to receive Methodists into their church fellowship. Dissent was the ultimate beneficiary of all Methodist quarrels; a notable example is the "Society" of Groes Wen, near Ponty-

pridd, which in 1745 rebelled against the refusal of the leaders to ordain ministers and formed itself into an Independent church. Thus, when Welsh Methodism in 1811 at last abandoned an increasingly difficult position and accepted the position of a Dissenting communion, it found its predecessors, the Baptists and the Independents, grown powerful in numbers and influence and all permeated with the Methodist spirit.

CHAPTER XI

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: RELIGION AND POLITICS

DURING the nineteenth century, Wales underwent great economic changes. Their scale may be inferred from the fact that, while in 1811 North and South Wales divided fairly equally between them a total population of rather more than 600,000, the inhabitants of Wales (excluding Monmouthshire) now number nearly 2,250,000, of which North Wales can only claim one-fourth. Iron and coal are the magic words that explain this transformation; while the copper mines of Parys Mountain in Anglesey and the lead mines of North Cardiganshire, both worked very profitably in the latter half of the eighteenth century, have become exhausted, their place has been more than filled by the industries of the South Wales coalfield. Quiet market towns like Swansea, Cardiff, and Newport have become great and thriving cities; secluded valleys like the Rhondda, once known as the "Alps of Glamorgan," are hives of industrial activity, while a network of railways stretches itself across the moor-

lands of Gwent and Glamorgan. In a large measure this signifies the submergence of all that was characteristically Welsh under a tide of foreign influence—the extension of England into what was once Wales. But hardly anywhere are the old landmarks entirely swept away, and in many regions it may with confidence be said that the Welsh tradition has survived the economic revolution. Such are the quarry districts of Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire, the Swansea Valley and the Carmarthenshire coalfield, the neighbourhood of Holywell and Mold. Interaction between these regions and the purely rural parts of Wales has enriched the life of the nation and infused new vigour into its politics, its literature, and its religion.

The closing years of the eighteenth century were a critical period in the history of Welsh Methodism. Death had removed the original leaders; theological disputes had produced division and strife; the initial energy and zeal were beginning to wane. At this juncture a vigorous leader appeared, gifted with great organizing power, and a new era opened up in the history of the body. If Rowlands and Harris be reckoned the pioneers of the Methodist movement, Thomas Charles (1755-1814) is the true founder of the Calvinistic Methodist Connexion. Hailing from that region in West Carmarthenshire which had produced so many ardent reformers, Charles began life as an ordinary parish priest, but in 1784 established himself at Bala as a Methodist preacher. His advent made the town a Methodist centre, a position which it still holds, and marks the beginning of the attack upon North Wales, where Methodism had previously been weak, but where its appeal in a short time was marvellously successful. To the aid of the movement Charles brought gifts which were, in the long run, far more valuable than pulpit eloquence; he provided it with a formal constitution, with a Bible dictionary embodying its theology, with a catechism which

generations of Welsh Methodists have learned by heart. The problem of popular education faced him to no less a degree than his predecessors; his final solution was the Sunday School, adopted notwithstanding much opposition from the stricter Puritans, who held it as wrong to keep school on the Sabbath day as to engage in manual labour. Adults as well as children flocked to these schools, and this custom has survived its immediate occasion in Charles's day, so that a Welsh Sunday School still differs from its English counterpart in embracing all members of the congregation. Almost the last act of Charles's busy life was to ordain eight laymen in 1811 to the Calvinistic Methodist ministry in North Wales. It was the end of an inevitable process; the effort to keep within the fold of the Church a movement with which the authorities of that Church would hold no truck was bound ultimately to yield to the logic of events, and thus Methodism became, instead of a party within the Church, a denomination.

A little earlier, Wesleyan Methodism had found a foothold in North Wales. Now that Wesley had passed away, the Arminian side of the movement was not content to be without representation among the Welsh who spoke only their own language. Thomas Coke, himself a Welshman from the town of Brecon, and powerful in Wesleyan circles, took up the matter and in 1800 persuaded the conference to send two missionaries to Wales, who began their work at Ruthin. Thus the country was furnished with the four religious denominations—Independents, Baptists, Calvinistic, and Wesleyan Methodists—who form the great bulk of the Protestant Dissenters of Wales. The nineteenth century saw all four increase vastly in numbers, erect chapels in all parts of the country (notably among the new industrial communities), and embrace a very large part of the population in their social, literary, and musical activities. The era was emphatically one of

great preachers; the natural eloquence and dramatic power of the race burst asunder old bonds and flowed into new channels. Great preaching gatherings in the open enabled thousands to listen to such masters of pulpit delivery as John Elias of Anglesey, William Williams of Wern, near Wrexham, and Christmas Evans, the inimitable dramatizer of Biblical narrative. To be a minister became the ambition of every talented youth in Nonconformist families, and the way was made easy by the existence of theological seminaries at Bala, Llangollen, Brecon, Carmarthen, Trefecca, Haverfordwest, and Pontypool. Nor did the general revival of religious zeal and activity fail to affect profoundly the Established Church. Hanoverian policy had made the episcopate entirely English, but, while eighteenth-century bishops were mostly birds of passage, looking for further preferment and indifferent to the welfare of their dioceses, Wales has good reason to remember with gratitude many of their nineteenth-century successors—such as Bishop Burgess of St. David's, the founder of St. David's College, Lampeter, for the training of Welsh clergy, Bishop Short of St. Asaph, active in the establishment of parochial schools, and Bishop Ollivant of Llandaff, a notable church builder. The Church was not without its gifted preachers—such as David Howell, dean of St. David's—and a new era began when, in 1870, the diocese of St. Asaph once more received a Welshman as its chief pastor, in the person of Joshua Hughes. The unhappy tradition of alien rule had at last been broken, and the Church entered upon a new career of service and popularity.

Religious changes had their inevitable reaction in the sphere of politics. It is a commonplace that the spread of Methodism did much to protect England from such a social upheaval as the French Revolution, and in Wales the same influence kept the country largely free from civil commotion. The Welsh

reckoned among them many who sympathized with revolutionary ideals; of this persuasion were the Baptist minister, Morgan John Rhys, who ultimately took refuge in the United States, the Independent minister, David Williams, best known as the founder of the Royal Literary Fund, and John Jones of Glan-y-gors, satirist and pamphleteer, who settled as an innkeeper in London and became the exponent in Welsh of the views of Thomas Paine. None of these, however, created a party in the country; they had to cope not only with the vigilance of the authorities, but also with the uncompromising hostility of the Methodists, whose political creed, down to the days of John Elias (1774-1841), was unhesitating Toryism. The older Dissenters, as became their ancestry, maintained the Whig tradition of liberty and reform, but they, too, discouraged the appeal to force and were, in the main, a pacifying influence. Industrialism accounts for the appearance of militant Chartism in the Monmouthshire coalfield in 1839, when the miners, led by John Frost, a local tradesman, marched upon Newport and were only dispersed by the fire of troops. The second Welsh outburst of the century had also a local origin; it was confined to South-Western Wales, and voiced the discontent of the agricultural population at the manifold abuses of the turnpike system. Men disguised in women's clothes, under a leader whom they called Rebecca, attacked toll-gates and toll-houses under cover of night and completely destroyed them. The trouble lasted throughout 1843, and did not die out until the Government undertook remedial measures.

Of wider significance than these sporadic disturbances was the gradual rise, in what had once been a Tory stronghold, of a powerful Liberal party. The long reign of the country squires had at last come to an end; they had for ages monopolized the parliamentary representation of Wales, both in the counties and

the boroughs, but the religious and the economic revolution now combined to destroy their prestige; they were no longer the natural leaders of the people, and they no longer controlled the sole sources of wealth. The change was not in any special degree the result of the Act of 1832, but followed from the rise of a new class to power—a middle class, which comprehended in its religious fraternity not only shop-keeper and farmer, but also quarryman, collier, farm labourer, and craftsman. In the political education of this class a prominent part was played by the poet-preacher, Hiraethog, who established, in 1843, the first successful Welsh Liberal newspaper, under the title *Yr Amserau* (*The Times*). Another pioneer in this field was Samuel Roberts, of Llanbrynmair, who, in *Y Cronicl* (1843-1857), advocated, in addition to political measures, such practical reforms as penny postage, scientific agriculture, and the extension of railways in Wales. It was in the general election of 1868 that the cumulative effect of a quarter of a century of Liberal propaganda declared itself. Gladstone had presented as the supreme issue the question of the disestablishment of the Irish Church, than which no appeal could have carried greater weight with the Welsh dissenter, whose fear of popery was overborne by his objection to the principle of a state establishment of religion. A Liberal tide swept over Wales, and the Welsh constituencies returned twenty-two Liberal members out of a total of thirty—among them being Henry Richard, M.P. for Merthyr, the illustrious apostle of international peace. Thus a complexion was given to Welsh politics which, in the rural areas, it has not yet lost, though Labour has of late established itself as the dominant political faith of the industrial south.

The change in political representation had as one result a certain amount of separate legislation for Wales. In 1830 Parliament abolished the last relic of

the separate legal existence of the country by putting an end to the Courts of Great Sessions, which had administered justice there since the time of Henry VIII., and including Wales in the general judicial system of the country. Regard for Welsh national traditions had now sunk to the lowest point, though it may be that a still lower depth was reached when, in 1846, an attempt was made, which the then Earl of Powis has the credit of defeating, to unite the See of St. Asaph to that of Bangor. The Liberal ascendancy brought a turn of the tide. In 1881 the sentiment of the country, which since the middle of the century had become strongly teetotal, secured the passage of the Welsh Sunday Closing Act. It was followed in 1889 by the Welsh Intermediate Education Act, in which the county of Monmouth, after a separation of three centuries and a half, was restored to its natural place among the Welsh shires. Finally, a long struggle was ended in 1920 by the Act for the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales, which separated the four Welsh dioceses from the Province of Canterbury and made the "Church in Wales" an independent and self-governing body.

CHAPTER XII

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: CULTURE AND EDUCATION

SIDE by side with the Methodist movement, a parallel current of opinion had affected Wales, which was in no way related to the other, but, in its issue, was

almost as important. This was the revival of interest in the past of the country: its antiquities, its departed heroes, its bardic traditions. It is natural to think of this backward glance as an aspect of the Romantic movement, and such in part it was. But for its origin it is necessary to go back to the early years of the eighteenth century; the first impulse came from the industry and acumen of Edward Llwyd, keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, in Oxford, whose *Archæologia Britannica* (1707) laid the foundation of the comparative study of the Celtic languages. In the next generation, a group of scholars distinguished themselves by their efforts to rescue from oblivion the literary and historical heritage of the race, to restore old standards, and to make bardism once more a reality. Two of them were clergymen, whose advancement in the Church met with as many obstacles as did that of the Methodists, though not (unless they have been maligned) for the same reasons. Evan Evans (Ieuan Brydydd Hir), in 1764, published *Some Specimens of the Poetry of the Antient Welsh Bards*, and was a diligent copyist of mediæval manuscripts. Goronwy Owen excelled as an original poet; reviving the old bardic technique, he breathed into it a new spirit and made it once more a channel of artistic expression. Although an intense lover of his native Anglesey, he found no foothold there, but spent his working days, first in English curacies and then, after 1757, in distant Virginia. The other three members of this group, who all worked together in the pursuit of common ideals, were the brothers Morris, also natives of Anglesey. Richard was a clerk in the Navy Office; he was a prominent figure in the circle of patriotic Welshmen now forming in London and, on the setting up of the first Cymmrodorion Society, in 1751, was chosen its president. William was a Customs officer in Holyhead, interested in botany and music. The genius of the family was Lewis (1700-

1765), land surveyor and Government agent, who spent the latter part of his life in North Cardiganshire, where his official duties as superintendent of the mines, as well as his Whig politics, brought him into conflict with the local landowners. At the same time, he was no Methodist, but a typical Welsh yeoman, sturdy and self-willed, mundane in outlook, and keenly patriotic. He was a competent poet in the "strict" and in the "free" metres, but his best work was done as antiquary, collector of MSS., literary critic, and correspondent. Owen and the three brothers wrote long, gossipy letters to each other, in Welsh of which the idiomatic raciness has never been surpassed.

A new feature which now presents itself is the interest of Englishmen of culture and taste in the antiquities and the scenery of Wales. This phase of the Romantic movement may be said to begin with the publication of *The Bard*, in 1757, an enterprise to which Gray was stimulated by hearing at Cambridge the blind harper, John Parry of Ruabon. Gray was followed in course of time by other men of letters; Southey celebrated in *Madoc* (1805) the mythical voyage of the son of Owain Gwynedd across the Atlantic, Wordsworth, De Quincey, Peacock, Borrow, travelled in Wales and recorded their impressions, Scott chose mediæval Wales as the scene of *The Betrothed*, and Matthew Arnold gracefully evoked for the Victorian public the delicate charm of Celtic literature (1867). The tour of Wales had now become a fashionable diversion; Thomas Pennant of Downing, a sound antiquary and student of natural history, had shown the way in the eighteenth century, and, with the beginning of the nineteenth, access to the mountains and valleys of Snowdonia was greatly facilitated by the development of a good system of roads. Coach traffic sprang up, inns were erected, mountain guides offered their services, and a stream of maps and handbooks poured from the press. A

fresh wonder of art was added to the marvels of nature when Thomas Telford, in the course of constructing a new route for the Irish mail coaches, threw across the Menai Straits the suspension bridge, opened in 1826, which is still the only means of road communication between the counties of Anglesey and Caernarvonshire.

It was unfortunate that this access of interest in a long-neglected country came at a time when learning and culture in the country itself did not appear at the best advantage. In 1800 Welsh scholarship, which had been worthily represented by Llwyd and the Morrisises, had fallen into the hands of William Owen Pughe and Edward Williams (Iolo Morgannwg). Pughe, who came to London from the foot of Cader Idris in 1776, was a diligent and enthusiastic student of Welsh antiquity, but highly uncritical and erratic in judgment; nevertheless he acquired an ascendancy as an authority upon the Welsh language and upon Welsh history which did not disappear until those studies were placed upon a new footing by the scholars associated with the University of Wales. Williams, a stonemason from Glamorgan, who during his life posed as the honest working man, is now recognized as the most accomplished literary forger Wales has ever seen. He appears to have had no motive save to enhance the glory of his native Morgannwg and to deal a blow at the literary domination of North Wales, but the mischief done to genuine Welsh studies by his endless fictions was far reaching and is only now being repaired. The forms of the bardic "gorsedd" are due to his fertile invention and have no other warrant of antiquity.

The salient feature of Welsh literature in the nineteenth century is the gradual coalescence of the two movements described above, the religious and the literary. One may see the beginning of the process in the "interludes" of Thomas Edwards (Twm o'r

Nant), in whose hands popular allegorical drama, enacted in the open, rose for a while above the level of mere rustic fun. Edwards was far removed from Puritan propriety, but his biting satire is reserved for parsons and squires; for the good work done by the Methodists he has genuine respect. In the early years of the century Welsh poetry becomes respectable and devotional in the hands of clergymen like the charming lyricist, John Blackwell, and of Dissenting laymen like Dewi Wyn and Robert ap Gwilym Ddu, two Caernarvonshire farmers, who made masterly use of the ancient metres. The Eisteddfod had now been revived, no longer as a mere professional test, but as a popular competitive festival, held in various parts of the country and countenanced by the gentry and the clergy. These gatherings served not only as a rallying ground for Welsh patriots and men of letters, but, as they grew in size and prestige, tended more and more to bring the whole nation within their orbit. They lost the original taint of Bohemianism, dating from the days when the bards foregathered in public houses to discuss their business, and won at last the support of the Calvinistic Methodists, who had long held aloof from a movement of such doubtful antecedents.

Perhaps the most typical figure of this concordat between the new and the old was Sir Hugh Owen (1804-1881). Born of Methodist parents in the corner of Anglesey which faces the town of Caernarvon, he passed from a London lawyer's office to the Civil Service, in which he spent his working life as a valued official. He was the leading member of the Welsh community in the Metropolis, and in that capacity resuscitated the Cymmrodorion Society, and embarked on schemes for the better control of the National Eisteddfod, now become an annual event, with a huge audience drawn from all parts of Wales. But it is in connection with Welsh education that his name will be longest remembered. His labours bore

permanent fruit in three directions. It was through his advocacy that the Nonconformists of Wales were induced to establish "British" schools, on an undenominational basis, for the elementary education of their children, schools which afterwards came under public control through the Act of 1870. A natural sequel was the building of two normal colleges, at Bangor and at Swansea, for the training of teachers, under the same auspices. The third enterprise was more ambitious—the establishment in Wales of an institution of university rank, without ecclesiastical colour and with fees adapted to the means of the Welsh commonalty. Aberystwyth College was opened on this basis in 1872; for years it was precariously maintained by voluntary contributions, collected by Owen with indefatigable zeal. He did not live to see the edifice of which he had laid the foundation completed, but later developments in Welsh education may assuredly be regarded as springing out of his work. He had discovered a public of enlightened Churchmen and far-seeing Dissenters, who realized the value for Wales of a general system of education and who were willing to make heavy sacrifices for this ideal. It was this public which obtained from the Conservative Government of 1889 an Act setting up a State-aided secondary school in every considerable market town in the country, which endowed national colleges, not only at Aberystwyth, but also at Cardiff, Bangor, and Swansea, and finally secured the union of these institutions in a federal university.

CHAPTER XIII

MODERN DEVELOPMENTS

It is not as easy to summarize the tendencies which are making themselves felt in the public life of Wales to-day as it is to describe those which have, in a measure, run their course and left their imprint upon the outlook and temper of the nation. But the twentieth century is not without well-marked features which betoken a different horizon from that of the nineteenth, and which the historian will, in days to come, no doubt regard as of high significance. Foremost among the new influences must be reckoned the University of Wales, established in 1893. This not only united the institutions engaged in higher education in a common effort, but, by making the arrangement of degree courses a matter for the country itself, made possible for the first time adequate study of the native language, literature, and history. Professors of Welsh were appointed, and were soon recognized as the leaders of Welsh scholarship, by a people who had hitherto been in this respect at the mercy of the amateur and the charlatan. Among these new mentors the outstanding figure was that of Sir John Morris Jones (1864-1929), poet, philologist, editor, and literary critic, who, by a combination of learning and bardic skill, redeemed the "strict metres" from the low estate into which they had fallen during the Victorian Era and restored them to their place as the appropriate vehicle of great poetry. His favourite and best-known rôle was that of chief adjudicator upon the chair prize at the National Eisteddfod. It was in this capacity that at Bangor in 1902 he awarded the chair to T. Gwynn Jones for the ode on "The Passing of Arthur," which has since been recognized as opening up a new epoch in Welsh literature, in the purity and antique

charm of its diction, the serenity of its atmosphere, and the loveliness of its imagery. Gwynn Jones has since added to his fame by other poems conceived in the same spirit and cast in the same mould; he has found a worthy compeer in R. Williams Parry, whose triumphs began with the ode on "The Summer," which won the chair at Colwyn Bay in 1910. These two stand at the head of a school of poets, of which the note is complete mastery of the revived bardic tradition, coupled with an objective, not to say a realist, outlook upon life. The Welsh muse has ceased to be the handmaid of the Welsh pulpit and now seeks its inspiration in the Middle Ages.

Other literary forms have benefited by the revival. The novel, after an admirable start with the works of Daniel Owen (d. 1895), who depicted with marvellous fidelity and abounding humour the ways of Victorian Nonconformity, has not made good its early promise, though something has been achieved by the graceful fancy of E. Tegla Davies. But lyric poetry in the "free" metres is well represented by W. J. Gruffydd, and the light essay by T. H. Parry Williams, while Welsh prose style gained in the eighties a new beauty and colour at the hands of Sir Owen Edwards (1858-1920), editor and school inspector, who is gratefully remembered for his unremitting efforts to secure a place for Welsh culture in the State system of education. Higher ideals of scholarship and a better standard of written Welsh have established themselves in the periodical Press, which is as prolific as ever, new ventures constantly taking the place of those which do not succeed in making good. In two directions the influence of the University, working through its colleges, has been manifest. Within a generation, the acting of vernacular plays, despite the old Puritan ban upon the theatre, has become a favourite pastime of the Welsh people, so that the "drama" has ousted the public lecture as the favourite means of raising

funds for Nonconformist enterprises. The case is clearly one in which the wide cultural influence of the University has overcome religious prejudice, and much may be hoped for from the movement, which at present is but in its infancy.

Another product of University activity is the revival of interest in the folk music of the country. Musical skill is an ancient endowment of the Welsh race, as Giraldus Cambrensis bears witness, and the bardic order was the custodian of musical as well as poetic values. But the music of mediæval Wales has not been handed down with the same pious care as its poetry; the musical inheritance of the country is a certain instinctive aptitude for song and a quantity of simple folk melody, of great variety and richness. Some of these "Welsh airs" became widely known at the end of the eighteenth century and, like "The March of the Men of Harlech," have now travelled round the world. These were, however, chiefly harper's tunes, and the famous march is so far from being the Welsh national anthem—a light in which strangers have sometimes chosen to regard it—that it has never had widely recognized Welsh words. The achievement of the twentieth century has been the recovery from imminent oblivion of the genuine folk song—the old airs to which ballads were sung by farm lads and lasses, by mothers to their children, and by itinerant minstrels in fair and market. It may be added that the last hundred and fifty years have seen the rise of folk music of a new type in the congregational tunes, of which so many, of undoubted merit, have come from the unknown, though others, such as the "Moab" of Ieuan Gwyllt (1870) and the "Aberystwyth" of Joseph Parry (1879), are from the hand of the experienced musician.

Until the end of the Great War, Welsh politics was dominated by the question of the disestablishment of the Church. The example of Ireland had shown what

could be done in this respect, and from 1868 onward the Church issue was the determining factor in most political contests. It had the advantage of a double appeal; it met the Nonconformist demand for equality and the abolition of privilege, and it also satisfied the rising national sentiment which called for the separate parliamentary treatment of Wales. Thus Wales was inevitably Liberal, for, although little support could be expected from Gladstone, the successor of Welsh squires at Hawarden and an ardent Churchman, the Welsh demand fitted in well with the general outlook of the party, as appeared when the matter was at last taken up in earnest, in 1894, by the Government of Lord Rosebery. The Act of 1920, which closed the controversy, was an agreed measure, born of the spirit of reconciliation which followed the Armistice; it gave Wales an archbishop, in the person of A. G. Edwards, Bishop of St. Asaph, the doughty champion of Church interests throughout the protracted struggle, and has since made possible the establishment of new Sees at Swansea and Brecon, Monmouth, and Maenan. Meanwhile, the preoccupation of the country with ecclesiastical questions diverted attention from all other issues, save the kindred ones of temperance and education; the electorates were swayed by the eloquence of Dissenting ministers, then at the height of their influence as "political Nonconformists." Much enthusiasm was aroused by the entry into Parliament in 1886 of Thomas Edward Ellis as M.P. for Merionethshire; as a farmer's son with an Oxford training, he was looked up to as the hope of Welsh democracy. But, although he secured the appointment, in 1893, of a Royal Commission to investigate land tenure and farming in Wales, no legislation followed, and in 1899 he was cut off by death in the midst of his career, leaving only the memory of a cultured and charming personality. Other young Liberals from Wales devoted the energy they could

spare from the disestablishment struggle to general English politics; it is hardly necessary to remind the reader how David Lloyd George, in this fascinating pursuit, outdistanced all his contemporaries and, while never ceasing to be the loyal representative of the Caernarvon Boroughs, had ultimately on his shoulders the high responsibility of piloting the Empire to a successful issue in the World War.

Politics in Wales has not lost its idealistic tinge, but the religious element is no longer dominant. The county councils have trained new leaders, without the platform power of the preachers, but with greater business experience. Old-time Liberalism is now threatened by two forces: the one powerful and dominant, the other strong only in its clear-cut aims and its enthusiasm. These are Labour politics and the Nationalist movement. It is no matter of surprise that, in an industrial area like the South Wales coalfield, the collier, the ironworker, and the tinsplate roller should cease to be content with representatives who only echoed middle class opinion, and should send to Parliament men drawn from their own class and deeply concerned in their own economic problems. At first, these were of the Liberal-Labour order, a type well represented by William Abraham, miner M.P. for the Rhondda Valley (d. 1922), who was as popular, under the name of "Mabon," on the Eisteddfod platform as in the House of Commons. The election, in 1900, as a member for Merthyr Tydfil, of J. Keir Hardie, the Scottish miner who had for some years previously been the fiery advocate of an independent Labour Party, may be looked upon as the beginning of a new era; it was a clear indication that henceforth industrial Wales would move away from its political ties with the rural north and west and ally itself with industrial England in a new international and economic outlook. After a thirty years' struggle, the Labour Party is now in complete possession of the parliamen-

tary representation of the South Wales coalfield, and, until the general election of 1929, its leader, the present Prime Minister, sat for the Welsh constituency of Aberavon.

It has been well remarked that since the industrial revolution Wales has lost much of the unity it formerly possessed. This is apparent, not only in the sphere of economics and in the trend of political activity, but also in other respects. The Welsh language has all but disappeared from Monmouthshire, and is now but poorly represented in Newport, Swansea, and Cardiff. It is plain from the example of Radnorshire, where the language retreated beyond the Wye in the eighteenth century, that, with the passing of Welsh, other distinctive features of Welsh life must also disappear, save those which are of interest only to the antiquary and the anthropologist. Welsh patriots have naturally been concerned at the prospect, and have sought to check the process of disintegration by the setting up of national institutions. The first of these, the University, was followed by the constitution of a "Central Welsh Board," to co-ordinate the work of the schools established under the provisions of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889. In the Board of Education there is now a separate Welsh department, but this does not satisfy those who believe that Welsh education, in its entirety, should be controlled by a public representative body. Through the munificence of Sir John Williams (d. 1926), Wales has a National Library, located at Aberystwyth, where the priceless Peniarth MSS., collected by Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt in the seventeenth century, are, with other national treasures, worthily housed. In Cardiff there is a fully equipped National Museum, situated in the Cathays Park; its dignified buildings form part of an impressive architectural scheme in which the zeal of the citizens has endeavoured to foreshadow the future of that great port as the destined capital of Wales.

For it is in the mind of many Welshmen that Wales cannot maintain its unity and distinctive characteristics without separate political, as well as educational and cultural institutions; their programme is home rule for Wales, with a local Parliament seated at Cardiff (or some other centre of the kind) and managing local, as distinct from imperial, affairs. In the hands of the new Nationalist Party, the demand is pressed further still; inspired by the example of Ireland, its adherents ask that Dominion status shall be conceded to Wales, and meanwhile are unwilling that the representatives of the country should take any part in the transaction of business at Westminster.

Altogether apart from politics, the zeal of the Welsh people for what is peculiarly their own is noticeably growing more pronounced. In the sixties, *The Times* could confidently allege that the Welsh language was the curse of Wales, and that the sooner all Welsh specialities disappeared from the face of the earth the better. In 1927, a departmental committee of the Board of Education issued a report upon the position of the language, which involved as its primary assumption that the disappearance of Welsh would be a calamity, and that all practicable steps should be taken to avert such a catastrophe. The force of opinion in the country itself is powerfully augmented by the influence of the Welsh communities across the border, in London, in Liverpool (sometimes dubbed the capital of Wales), in Manchester, and in Birmingham. Though not so widely dispersed as the Irish and the Scotch, the Welsh have shown an aptitude for colonization; Pennsylvania was largely peopled by Welsh Quakers, and the United States has many Welsh-speaking communities. An interesting experiment was the founding, on the banks of the Chubut River in Patagonia, of a colony which was intended to be an independent centre of Welsh culture; though now politically subject to the Argentine Republic, it retains its Welsh speech, and,

after many trying experiences, has become a prosperous settlement. North, south, east, and west, Welshmen will be found singing at patriotic gatherings what has become within the last forty years the Welsh national anthem, the strain of "Hên Wlad fy Nhadau" (Old Land of my Fathers), of which the broad and simple melody was composed by Evan James of Pontypridd, and the words written by his son James. This sketch of the chequered history of many thousands of years may well close with the familiar refrain—

Gwlad, gwlad, pleidiol wyf i'm gwlad!
Tra môr yn fur i'r bur hoff bau,
O bydded i'r hên iaith barhau!

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